
The Meaning and Method

Of

Urban Capacity and Urban Capacity Studies

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the question ‘What is meant by “*urban capacity*”?’ This is an increasingly important question as the government claims that the concept, through its technical study -the *urban capacity study*- is central to the planning for housing process, with this new technical study forming the foundation on which local authorities and regional authorities will increasingly develop their housing policy. However, the concept of ‘*urban capacity*’ is relatively new, and is still evolving. Therefore the meaning of *urban capacity* is important for processes of planning; but it is also a key idea driving development policy, ultimately determining where houses are built, the form they are likely to take, and the way that people in the future are likely to live.

The *urban capacity* literature suggested that the concept had moved from being linked primarily to environmental capacity to being linked primarily to planning for housing provision, establishing the need to investigate the concept’s evolution in meaning.

To investigate this evolution, two descriptive concept-models were developed, and the research identified three windows that gave insight into the construction of the concept of *urban capacity* and its usage. These three windows were: firstly, government texts to explore how *urban capacity* was argued; secondly, a survey of *urban capacity studies* to investigate how *urban capacity* was assessed and the implications of the methods on the meaning of the concept; thirdly, a case study of South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, the co-sponsor to this research, to investigate how the concept and *urban capacity studies* were used at the local level.

This thesis concludes that the concept of *urban capacity* has indeed evolved; but that this evolution is more complicated than it may at first appear, and that this is likely to have implications for future policy-makers.

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Author's Declaration

The material within this thesis is all my own original research; none of it has been presented before, and none of it has been based on any joint research.

Graham Sout modified maps taken from South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan in chapter 9 (*Figures 9.2 and 9.4*).

Abbreviations

Organisations' Abbreviations

CPRE	Council for the Protection of Rural England
CURS	Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, at University of Birmingham
DEFRA	Department of the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DoE	Department of the Environment
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
EA	Environment Agency
EHA	Empty Homes Agency (previously <i>room</i>)
EP	English Partnerships
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FoE	Friends of the Earth
GLA	Greater London Authority
GO-NE	Government Office North East
HBF	Housebuilders Federation
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
LGMB	Local Government Management Board
LPAC	London Planning Advisory Committee
NHBC	National House-Building Council
NHTPC	National Housing and Town Planning Council
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPCS	Office of Population and Census Statistics
RICS	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
ROSE	Rest of South East (Region)
SAUS	School of Advanced Urban Studies, at University of West of England
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
STMBC	South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Association
TWDC	Tyne and Wear Development Corporation
UCL	University of City of London
UTF	Urban Task Force
UWE	University of West England

Planning Abbreviations

CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
EIP	Examination in Public
LOTS	Living Over The Shop
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
NLUD	National Land-Use Database
PMM	Plan-Monitor-Manage
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
RPG	Regional Policy Guidance
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UA	Unitary Authority
UDA	Urban Development Area
UDP	Unitary Development Plan

Abbreviations to be found in Urban Capacity Studies

CDV	Conversion Desirability Value- used in the North West Study Manual
SDV	Site Desirability Value- used in the North West Study Manual

Technical Transport Models used in Urban Capacity Studies

START	Transport model in the Leicestershire/Leicester Study
TRIPS	Transport model in the Leicestershire/Leicester Study
CALTRANS	Transport model in the Leicestershire/Leicester Study

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introducing the Issue of Urban Capacity (*UC*)

This ESRC CASE-funded¹ research, co-sponsored by South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council (STMBC),² focuses on the meaning and evolution of urban capacity (*uc*), with a view to discovering what is meant by *uc*, how this concept has changed, and what the implications of this change are for practitioners. The research investigates these ideas through exploring the way the concept is constructed and argued particularly by government, and the way that it is assessed through urban capacity studies. This research reflects on the way that *uc* as an idea has changed in terms of its meaning and in the way that it is being assessed to the point where it no longer means what it once did. The aims of this research are to establish the meaning of *uc*, to demonstrate the change in meaning of *uc*, and to reflect on the implications of these changes

The importance of the observed change in meaning of *uc* is contextualised through the government's recent claim that the concept of *uc* is now situated 'at the heart of the planning for housing process' via its technical study, the urban capacity study (*ucs*)³ (DETR:2000 p.5).⁴ In this context, this technical study has become the foundation on which local authorities and regional authorities are now expected to develop their housing policy, and most particularly their policy related to the location of future housing. Therefore, what is meant by the term *uc* and what is assessed as *uc* are important in the processes of planning.

However, the meaning of *uc* is also important in a wider societal sense, as it is one of the key ideas that is currently driving housing development policy, and will therefore be one of the ideas which ultimately determines where dwellings are built, the form they are likely to take, and the way that people in the future are likely to live. Consequently, the way that *uc* is understood, what the concept contains, how it is expressed and how it is used ultimately affect how and where people live, and how their environment is shaped, and if the conceptualisation of *uc* changes, then, given its new centrality in policy terms, this will have far-reaching influences on everyday lives, and the local environment.

¹ ESRC CASE award number: S00429937055.

² Here it should be noted that the views expressed are the views of the researcher, not of STMBC.

³ *Ucs* refers to urban capacity studies, it is used for both singular and plural abbreviations; if a possessional clause is needed then it will be written *ucs*'.

⁴ *Tapping the Potential*.

This having been said, *uc* is a relatively new term, first appearing in London in 1987 (LPAC:1987), and was until recently a fairly peripheral concept, more rooted in environmental assessment than in housing policy (see chapter 2), and assessed voluntarily by those authorities which thought it relevant, rather than as the almost compulsory requirement it has now become.

From this it can be seen that there have been changes in the way *uc* is thought about and used. Firstly, it has changed position in policy terms, moving from a peripheral environmental concern to a central, housing policy issue. Secondly, its function has changed from providing additional housing policy support to becoming the underpinning foundation on which housing policy, particularly in relation to housing location, is built. Thirdly, there have been changes in its content, with the emphasis moving away from environmental concerns towards housing development issues.

However, there has also been some retention of key ideas and functions associated with *uc*. In terms of its role it is still used to support housing policy claims in the contentious arena of the planning public inquiry, since as a concept it is still articulated as an assessment, measured by the number of dwellings per hectare (dw/ha) derived from a quasi-technical study (the *ucs*), and presented as evidence.

This phenomenon of *uc*, on the one hand continuing to be expressed in the same terms as it always has been, whilst on the other experiencing such fundamental changes in the way that it was used and the content it was directed to consider, has enabled the concept to change fundamentally, whilst continuing to look the same. It is this conceptual evolution that this research wishes to explore, chiefly because of the ambiguity it has produced in the concept of *uc* and because of the apparent inadvertent concealment of these changes that has occurred through the retention of its particular expression as an assessment.

1.2 The Structure of This Research's Analysis

To this end, this research begins by presenting the concept of *uc* in the wider discussion of planning policy and practice (chapter 2). Here it reflects on how, in the 1990s, primarily in the context of land-use planning, *uc* was derived from the seemingly inevitable collision of the sustainability imperative on the one hand and the housing debate on the other, and how each of these has helped shape the conceptualisation of *uc*.

Here the discussion is structured as a practitioner-commentated and academically-critiqued unfolding policy context. This starts with sustainable land-use planning, and its early contribution to the *uc* concept: environmental capacity, and environmental capacity

assessment. It then outlines and critiques, through academic comment, the then-existing planning for housing process, before presenting the issue of the 1995 household projection, set up and explored as 'the problem'. Subsequently, it moves on to outline the perceived possible solution: the previously-developed-land target, the argued case of urban intensification, the drive towards an urban renaissance, and finally the changes to the planning for housing system, all in relation to *uc*, before finally reflecting on the *uc* literature *per se*.

As this research uses a large number of government texts, many from the same year, and explores how these texts argue *uc*, particularly in chapter 4, to assist in this discussion, the research has used abbreviated document titles for the key texts (see chapter 4), rather than the more usual DETR:2000a, DETR:2000b referencing system. Consequently, at their initial introduction the texts will be introduced and their subsequent references will be footnoted. Thereafter, they will be referred to in the way prescribed. For example DETR:2000 (above) refers to *Tapping the Potential: Assessing Urban Housing Capacity: Towards Better Practice*. In this research this text has been referred to as *TtP*. Similarly, this research also analyses a number of *ucs* texts, and these too have been given more easily identifiable references, for example the Hertfordshire Study refers to the *Hertfordshire Dwelling Provision Through Planned Regeneration: Final Draft*. These texts are fully referenced in *Figure 5.1* in chapter, and their identification for this research is discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

Given this research's interest in the conceptual construction and evolution of *uc*, an approach to reflect on how *uc* was being argued and presented needed to be developed. Here this research drew on argumentation theory (discussed in chapter 3) and, using the government texts presented in chapter 4, develops two models of *uc*: a Constrained Model and an Opportunity Model. These have been depicted diagrammatically to reflect the relationships between the issues as they are argued in the texts. These diagrams are further supported by tables, one for each model, and taken together they have been used as the main analytical tool to reflect on the ways that *uc* has been perceived through argument, and through the methods used by *ucs*. Here it needs to be clearly stated that these models are descriptive diagrams representing the main issues and their relationship to each other. They are not any other type of model, e.g. economic models; they do not produce predictions or extrapolated results, and they should not be understood in this way. A full description of the models and their use can be found in chapter 3.

The research identified three windows which gave insight into how the concept of *uc* was being constructed and used, and to what policy effect. These three windows were:

- government texts to explore how *uc* was being ‘officially’ argued. This window was chosen because it was thought that the government’s perception of *uc* would be one of the more influential ones reflected in how others would come to understand and use the concept.
- urban capacity studies (*ucs*); these were researched through a survey of 22 *ucs*, and this window was thought to be important as it expressed how *uc* had been and was being assessed, which, given the weight being placed on the need to assess *uc*, was thought likely to be both influenced by and influencing on the meaning of *uc* through the methods that were used and through the *ucs*’ contents (see chapters 5-8).
- the local level; researched through a case study of South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council (STMBC), to investigate how the concept was being argued and assessed in the context of local level concerns and issues, rather than the more strategic ones presented by government. Here the case study was chosen primarily because of its accessibility and interest due to its contribution to this research (see chapter 9).

The first window reviews relevant government texts (chapter 4) to draw out how *uc* was being argued, using the two models as a point of comparison. Here the process was iterative, as the exploration of the government’s argumentation produced the two diagrammatic models representing the government’s different constructions of *uc* in relation to the issues, and the models in turn were used as fixed points to demonstrate how the government had altered its thinking through time; i.e. the evolution of government’s thinking on *uc*. This research then uses these two conceptual frameworks as fixed points against which the various government texts and other source material are compared. From this it is possible to demonstrate in the first instance that the government’s own conceptualisation of *uc* has shifted through its evolution.

The second window uses a survey of *ucs* to reflect on the meaning of the methods found in these *ucs* (chapter 7) and the contents of these *ucs* (chapter 8). The survey was informed by other *ucs* surveys, but reviews some *ucs* for the first time, and includes *ucs* up to 2002. The survey method, along with the way the *ucs* were analysed, is elaborated on in Chapter 5. In this analysis this research builds on the method-types offered by the then-DETR in *TtP*, developing them further where they fall short of the research’s requirements. Using

the conceptual frameworks of the first window these method-types were explored for their meaning (chapter 7). This was then related to the preferences of the government (primarily derived from *TtP*, see chapter 6), and the ability of the differing methods to deliver assessments in keeping with the government's current conceptualisation of *uc*. Here the analysis also drew on some foundation ideas from Llewelyn-Davies, and to a lesser extent Urbed, to develop the analytical framework for the *ucs* (referenced in chapter 5). Finally this section also explores why *ucs* had a tendency to underestimate *uc*.⁵

Chapter 8 reflects specifically on the assessment-content of *ucs*. Here this research noted that for all intents and purposes this assessment-content constituted the assessed *uc*. Therefore the analysis focused on what was included in the assessment-content in terms of the area *ucs* covered, the development-opportunities they explored and the constraints they considered. The research also reflected on how these development-opportunities and constraints were characterised and the implications this had on the way *uc* was being understood. As with the *ucs* method analysis, this analysis was also set in the context of time and the government's advice, and analysed against this research's models to see how the assessment-content changed, to what effect, and with what implications on the meaning of *uc*. The way this analysis was completed is more fully explained in chapter 5.

The findings from chapters 6-8 are concluded and related back to the main research question at the end of each chapter. These conclusions focus on the meaning of *uc* and its evolution through the various elements of an *ucs*, and reflect on how well the government's apparently preferred method-types (chapters 6 and 7) and assessment-content preferences (chapter 8) accord with its argumentation in chapter 4. The conclusions also focus on the *ucs*' use of these method-types and assessment-content over the period, their adoption of government advice, and how this has been adapted. The summation of the conclusions from this second window occurs in chapter 10, in the context of the findings from the other windows to reflect on how uniformly *uc* has evolved. Here the conclusion is that *uc* has evolved and moved away from its earliest meaning, but that it has not evolved uniformly- suggesting an inconstancy in its development.

The third window (chapter 9) uses a single case study approach (described more fully in chapter 9) to investigate how STMBC argued its understanding of *uc*, using the same method of analysis as that used for the government. Here the argumentation was gleaned from relevant local authority texts, as well as workshop and interview material, focusing

⁵ See *TtP*, p.33.

again on how *uc* as a concept was being constructed and how this had changed. As STMBC were also in the process of completing an *ucs* this too was explored, in the same way as the other *ucs* had been explored although, unlike the other *ucs*, their methods and approach could be compared to their argumentation of the *uc* concept, and how it was influenced by and influenced policy.

The research concludes by bringing together the findings from these three windows (chapter 10). It reasserts what each of these windows indicates about the evolution of the concept of *uc*. It also highlights the links and discrepancies which appear between the government's thinking, *ucs* assessment methods and content, and a local authority's view. From this it reflects on the general direction of thinking overall and its implications on policy and practice in the longer term, and considers the possible avenues for further research which this research and these conclusions present.

Chapter 2 The Context

Chapter 2 The Context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter places *uc* into its context. Therefore it reflects mainly on land-use planning paying particular attention to how it has responded to, firstly, the relatively recent sustainability imperative, and secondly, the ongoing demand for housing. It is primarily descriptive, placing the evolving idea of *uc* within this unfolding policy context, reflected upon by academics and practitioners. This review focuses on a series of policy issues and responses resulting in particular policy solutions, which have fed into and shaped the meaning and understanding of the term ‘*uc*’, and it begins to unpack the main themes of *uc*- which will be considered in more detail in the later chapters.

As it is a policy term, and is chiefly policy driven, much of the discussion of *uc* has occurred in practitioner literature, including academic comment commissioned by particular interested parties, and therefore much of the literature in this review comes from practitioner literature. However, where academics have made comment on *uc* or its related issues in academic journals this has been included.

Uc is primarily, although not exclusively, situated in the discussion on land-use planning and urban form, which has ebbed and flowed since planning’s inception. This has variously advocated urban containment,¹ and urban growth/expansion;² new settlements,³ and the maintenance of the existing.⁴ This has presented different idealised forms, Garden Cities,⁵ Compact Cities,⁶ Low density housing,⁷ and High density living.⁸ These all depend on the visionary’s particular preoccupation, driven by the circumstances of the day.

A current planning preoccupation, given more credibility than many (Breheny:1992a p.1), is that of sustainability and sustainable development- particularly in relation to land-use

¹ Elson:1986.

² Troy:1996.

³ Breheny et al:1993.

⁴ Jacobs J:1962; Aldous:1992; Thompson-Fawcett:1999. (Where more than one author has the same surname, this research has differentiated them using an initial.)

⁵ Howard:1985.

⁶ Danzig and Saaty:1973.

⁷ Troy:1996.

⁸ Le Corbusier:1933.

planning. The issue of sustainability has re-energised the search for idealised urban forms now focusing on the sustainability of different possible options. One of the answers appears to be, albeit with considerable reservations, compact cities, with the emphasis on the way urban consolidation/intensification assists in achieving greater sustainability. This has had repercussions on the way the meaning and use of '*uc*' as an idea has evolved. Sustainability has also generated new ideas and attempted to apply ideas from elsewhere to the land-use planning field, notably for this research environmental capacity, out of which *uc* was born. Therefore one element of *uc* is derived through a policy and practice response to the particular concern of improving the sustainability of existing land-use planning (Counsell:1999). This emphasis on sustainable planning and environmental capacity will be reviewed first to show how it initially influenced the concept of *uc*.

However, concurrent with big visions, land-use planning is influenced by more prosaic day-to-day discussions. One of these centres on the provision of housing. In the mid-1990s the need to provide for an unprecedented number of households arose due to a number of factors. These were: changes in the social structures and dynamics reflected in the 1995 household projections; Britain's system of planning for housing at that time; and changes in households' housing expectations and preferences. Effectively this 'need' collided with the greater sustainability drive, an extensive debate ensued and a re-shaped idea of *uc* emerged as a central part of the overall resolution.

2.2 Sustainable Land-use Planning

Practitioners and academics use *uc* in the context of ascertaining ways of making land-use more sustainable, although of course sustainability and sustainable development extends beyond just sustainable land uses. One sustainable land-use solution is to use land in less profligate ways, (Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE):1998; Friends of the Earth (FoE):1997; Burton T. and Matson:1996). Here, in relation to housing, the focus was on the continuation of transference of rural land into urban land, due to developing greenfield sites for housing⁹ (Bibby and Shepherd:1990 and 1996).

Consequently, some have explored ways of reducing greenfield land-take, reflecting firstly on what brownfield land and other housing opportunities are actually available; and secondly, on the constraining processes and problems limiting the full utilisation of these

⁹ Here Hall P:1999 suggested that the preservation of rural land was a poor reason for directing more housing to urban areas although he cites other better reasons for doing so.

brownfield opportunities, and ways of overcoming them. These ideas have been absorbed into the concept of *uc* through the types of development-opportunities local authorities are requested to explore in their *ucs*, and will be reflected upon in more detail both in this literature review and in this research's analysis of the *ucs*.

The importance of reducing consumption of scarce resources was also recognised, most particularly in relation to travel consumption (Newman and Kenworthy:1989); but also other energy consumption (Owens:1992). The thought was that different patterns of built form (i.e urban form) produced more or less efficient energy use. This work has spawned a whole literature on sustainable land-use patterns focusing primarily on the city, effectively presenting urbanity as the sustainable solution (e.g. Breheny:1992a; Haughton and Hunter:1994; Jenks and Burgess:2000, and argued for, Satterthwaite:1999 p.55-61).

Therefore it was felt that more intensive use of brownfield development, particularly in urban settlements, could reduce the greenfield land-take and minimise transport use, effectively providing a more sustainable pattern of development than the one occurring at the time.

Moreover, in response to the new sustainability criteria a new examination of many idealised urban forms has emerged. Here ideas tended to overlap, but one of the more notable options has been the concept of the compact city.¹⁰ This has generated a considerable literature all of its own,¹¹ some of which focused on the monocentric/polycentric issues of urban form;¹² some on the importance of public transport, highlighting the importance of public transport nodes and public transport networks;¹³ and others on particular development options, e.g. urban villages.¹⁴ An alternatively preferred option has been the self-sufficient, self-contained new town development on a good public transport network to reduce the likelihood of car commuting.¹⁵ These various ideas have fed into policy and into the idea of *uc*- often forming the underlying assumptions that can be found within it.

¹⁰ Arguably government's preferred policy: Breheny:1996, citing Commission of the European Communities (CEC):1990, and DETR:1998 *Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice* (referred to in this research as DETR:1998 *Planning for Sustainable Development*).

¹¹ E.g. Breheny:1992b; Jenks et al:1996; Jenks and Burgess: 2000, de Roo and Miller:2000.

¹² E.g. David Lock Associates 'growth scenarios' cited in Thomas and Cousins:1996, p.55.

¹³ DETR:1998 *Planning for Sustainable Development*, 1998; Hall P. and Schoon:2002.

¹⁴ Aldous:1992; Hall P:1999; Rudlin and Dodd:2003; Tait et al:2002; Thompson-Fawcett:2000.

¹⁵ Breheny et al:1993; and advocated by Hall against Schoon's contestation- Hall P. and Schoon:2002.

The literature also focused on the need to change behaviours through the alteration of land-use and service provision. Here, changing transportation modes has been a particular preoccupation, thought achievable through reducing the convenience of the car, e.g. 'car-free housing' (see Llewelyn-Davies, 1998: London SRQ Study, Annex 1),¹⁶ whilst emphasising

the ability to walk to facilities and services ('*ped-sheds*' – Llewelyn-Davies: London SRQ Study, p.25), and improving other transport modes. Again this is seen to be applicable primarily to urban (not rural) situations, where a critical population mass can be mobilised to use the provided public transport options, making these feasible.

Therefore, although sustainable urban development appears contradictory (Breheny:1992c; Girardet:1999 and Williams K:1999), and although there are measures aimed at increasing rural sustainability, the policy consensus for sustainable land-use planning, supported reservedly by academic opinion, has been an urban solution. This is one reason for directing the additional housing towards urban areas, and the subsequent need to assess *uc*, however the concept is understood.

2.3 Environmental Capacity

One idea that emerged from this sustainability discussion and which fed into the *uc* discussion was environmental capacity. This idea stemmed from a scientific concept which centred on the ability of wildlife habitats to continue to sustain resident populations.¹⁷ This suggests that there is an upper limit or threshold beyond which the environment cannot sustain the population, i.e. that the environmental capacity is finite (see Barton:1996 p.131; Connell:1995 p.177; Meadows et al:1972; Van Dieren:1995). Some have extended this idea to the city; e.g. Knight (1996 p.118-119) noted that 'the compact city is finite... and if [it] has a finite capacity then it is not on its own a true long term sustainable solution'. Where this connection has been made those demonstrating concern about the proximity of development to this threshold often talk of town-cramming with its implications of too much being squeezed into a finite space, to the detriment of people's living experience (e.g. West Sussex Study:1996 p.1). However, others have pointed out that human populations can alter their environment and can therefore live at much higher densities than the localised area can 'naturally' sustain (see Barton:1996

¹⁶ See chapter 5 for a full explanation of the referencing of *ucs* in this research.

¹⁷ E.g. a lake maintaining an aquatic population of fish, aquatic invertebrates, insects, plants and waterweeds.

p.131, Grigson:1995 p.17, Rydin:1998 p.750). Consequently, environmental capacity cannot simply be applied to humans in humanly created situations.

Conceptually, environmental capacity has relied heavily on an economic understanding of the environment (Cowell:1997), highlighting the notion of the environment as an asset, reflected in the way that it is talked about: 'environmental capital' (Grigson:1995; Owens and Cowell:2002; Rydin:1998 p.762) 'environmental stock' (Barton:1995 p.19), 'environmental auditing' (Barton:1995). Moreover, this understanding of the environment has been extended to accommodate the multifaceted nature of the environment, through the accounting of a multitude of assets across social, environmental, and economic concerns.

These have been broadly sub-divided (CAG:1997) into: critical environmental (natural) capacity - this is vital and irreplaceable, and therefore needs considerable protection; and constant environmental (natural) assets¹⁸ - this allows for some development and negotiation over the particular characteristics of the assets which need to be protected. A third category is tradeable assets (suggested by Levitt:1997 used by Owens and Cowell:2002) - this category allows trade-offs through replacement (Cowell:1997). This economic understanding of the environment enables the auditing or assessing of environmental capacity, a concept which has been carried forward into the concept of *uc*, and its need to be assessed (see chapter 4). However, Owens and Cowell (2002) thought that this treatment of the environment actually devalued it, through disaggregation, and by taking a reductive approach to the environment.

Barton (1995), Grigson (1995), Jacobs M (1993 and 1997), and Rydin (1998) pointed out that environmental capacity is a social construct, reflecting socially constructed values and socially constructed judgements derived through socially constructed means- indicators, cost-benefit analysis or whatever- rather than an objectively determined threshold derived from the real limitations of nature. Healey and Shaw (1993) suggested that the problem is not so much definitional as operational.

Here Owens and Cowell (2002) added that these judgements are political, and Grigson (1995), Counsell (1999), Owens and Cowell (2001), and Rydin (1998) all noted that environmental capacity study findings are used to support contentious policies in the arena of a planning public inquiry. Rydin (1998) and Owens and Cowell (2002) both noted the emphasis on rationality in the methods chosen and Owens and Cowell suggested that it was

¹⁸ Grigson (1995 p.12) talked about critical environmental capital and constant environmental capital whilst Owens (1994 p.443) talked of critical natural capital and constant natural assets.

this ability to make value judgements appear neutral through the use of seemingly objective scientific analysis that was so appealing with these particular methods of assessment.

Grigson's response to the arbitrary nature of environmental capacity studies was to advocate greater clarity and improved transparency through more rigorous technical approaches (see Grigson:1995 p.21-23). However, whilst Owens and Cowell (2002) applauded Grigson's concern about 'black-box studies' (Grigson:1995 p.25) they point out that some of the inputs (e.g. projections and market appraisals) are themselves 'black boxes' and expressed uncertainty over the solution of escalating the 'analytical arms race', suggesting instead that the stimulation of a 'more explicitly political debate' surrounding environmental capacity would be a better solution (Owens and Cowell:2002 p.54).

Jacobs M:1997 (p.19-25) reflects this view in his offering of environmental capacity as a metaphor as well as a measurement. To him it was as important to 'conceptualise the relationship between human society and the natural world.' He ascribed two meanings to capacity: firstly, the ability to produce something, and secondly, the maximum level or volume of that ability; and he felt that environmental capacity with capacity's duality of meaning allowed this conceptualisation of this relationship to be expressed.

Uc, as an initial idea, has emerged from environmental capacity. Here the crossover point emerged as some authorities tried to assess the 'environmental capacity of cities' (Roebuck and Gurney:1995 p.16). At this juncture Grigson (1995) discussed the Chester Study¹⁹ and the Hertfordshire Study²⁰ as if they were both environmental studies; Counsell (1999 p.215) noted that the *uc* debate was closely linked to the debate on environmental capacity, with a number of authorities using environmental capacity to argue an *uc* case against further development.

However, Llewelyn-Davies, in their 1997 report for UK Round Table for Sustainable Development Report (*Housing and Urban Capacity*),²¹ included the Chester Study in their considerations of *ucs*'s but dismissed it from a fuller analysis on the grounds that it was an environmental study. This view was supported by Urbed's survey (Urbed:1999 which fed

¹⁹ Arup Economic and Planning (1995) *Environmental Capacity: A Methodology for an Historic City* Chester, Chester City Council known in this research as the Chester Study.

²⁰ See chapter 5 for an explanation of the referencing of *ucs* in this research.

²¹ In this research this report is referenced as *Housing and Urban Capacity*, and is listed in the bibliography under the UK Round Table for Sustainable Development.

into *TtP*.) which included the Chester Study but suggested that it was aiming to achieve something quite different.

Perhaps Jacobs M (1997 p.23) made the clearest distinction between urban and environmental capacity when he noted that environmental capacity was about assessing environmental attributes, whilst other studies, i.e. *ucs*, assessed development potential, with the emphasis on development. However, in the mid-1990s the distinction was hazy, and *uc* was clearly being perceived in the context of environmental capacity.

Consequently, the ideas of environmental capacity and *uc* share many of the same characteristics, thus critiques' reflections on the early rendition of *uc* have been very similar to those on environmental capacity. As with environmental capacity, *uc* has been identified as something needing to be assessed (see chapter 4), and both environmental capacity and *uc* are measured in terms of the amount of (usually housing) development that can occur (Grigson:1995 and see chapter 4). Both environmental capacity and *uc* have been simultaneously constructed as thresholds beyond which it is dangerous to go (chapter 4), whilst still being presented as a value judgement, with a recognition that people's and societies' ability to alter their environment means that they can alter their environment to increase capacity, be it urban or environmental. Therefore, within the notion of *uc*, as with environmental capacity, there is a paradoxical notion of absolutism and relativism suggesting finite limits independent of other pressures on the one hand, and alterable positions dependent on circumstance on the other (see chapter 4).

Moreover, the use of studies of urban capacity and environmental capacity has been similar. They have both been used predominantly to support planning policy at public inquiry. In this context, like environmental capacity studies, *ucs* tend to be presented as value neutral and technical rather than policy-driven, e.g. the West Sussex Study²² was presented as a 'technical report' in support of West Sussex's Structure Plan at the point of inquiry. Consequently, like environmental capacity studies, *ucs* have been challenged on the grounds of their supposed neutrality (see Grigson:1995 and Counsell:1999). Some commentators have noted: the circularity of the policy loop, where policies are used to make assessments and then the assessment is used to justify the policy (Urbed:1999 and *TtP*); its lack of transparency and 'black box' nature (Grigson:1995 and *Housing and Urban Capacity*); the range of methods being used, and lack of consistency and comparability (*Housing and Urban Capacity* (Recommendation 6, p.13) and South West

²² See chapter 5 for explanation on referencing.

Study p.11),²³ and the value judgements that underlie the technical approaches (see *Housing and Urban Capacity*, Owens and Cowell:2002).

2.4 The 1992-1999 Planning for Housing Process

Running more or less concurrently with this discussion on sustainable land-use planning was a discussion on planning for housing. In 1992, a new planning guidance was produced for housing: *Planning Policy Guidance 3 Housing*²⁴ (*PPG3:1992*), which emphasised the need to provide an adequate supply of housing land, primarily for the now main provider²⁵ - the private sector housebuilder.

The overall system variously described by many commentators (e.g. Baker and Wong:1997; Green Balance:1994; Hull:1998), relied heavily on the household projections calculated from census data and population trends.²⁶ These provided an estimate of the likely future numeric housing requirement both countrywide and regionally. The local planning authorities then decided the likely numeric housing requirement at the regional level, in conjunction with government, regional representatives and with some development²⁷ and environment interest groups.²⁸ This took account of contextual factors thought likely to influence the household projections.²⁹ This group also determined the contribution each authority was required to provide. The local authorities then designated sufficient land for housing to maintain a 5-year supply in their local plan, having first completed a land-availability study in negotiation with the Housebuilders' Federation (HBF) to determine where sites were available and when they might be developed.³⁰

This system, commonly known as predict-and-provide (see for example Breheny and Hall P:1996 p.40; Vigar et al:2000), continued against much criticism until *PPG3:1992* was revised.³¹ These criticisms were three-fold. Firstly, there were systemic criticisms. It was

²³ An explanation of the referencing of *ucs* is presented in chapter 5 of this research.

²⁴ In this research referred to as *PPG3:1992* to differentiate it from the newer revision *Planning Policy Guidance 3 Housing 2000* (referred to in this research as *PPG3:2000*).

²⁵ Goodchild:1992 p.45-48 provides a description of how planning for housing, and housing provision shifted from a public provision to a private provision during the 1980s.

²⁶ See below for a fuller discussion on these projections.

²⁷ Notably the HBF.

²⁸ Notably the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE).

²⁹ E.g. economic trends, policies likely to impact migration, the condition of the existing stock, service provision, vacancies etc.

³⁰ The land availability study was completed by the local authority in negotiation with the housebuilders every 2 years.

³¹ However, practitioners and stakeholders were contemplating the likely change in system prior to 2000, as the draft *PPG3* came out in 1999, and considerable concern about its emphasis had been articulated even before that. This new system is reflected upon more fully below. (in this research the 1999 draft *PPG3* has been referred to as *PPG3:(Draft)*).

argued that the system was overly centralised, top-down and numbers driven, and was consequently paying little regard to the local conditions (Green Balance:1994; Vigar et al:2000). It was also argued that it created an arena of contention where the main protagonists could slug it out in a seemingly endless battle of attrition, forever pitted against each other (Vigar et al:2000); and it was further contended that the system awarded asymmetrical stakeholder influence by officially privileging the housebuilders through the production of the land-availability study, a privilege not afforded to other interests (Hull:1998 and Rydin:1988).

Secondly, it was criticised for its pseudo-technical approach. It was argued that the land availability studies were political- being both policy-driven and partisan³² but that they appeared to be technical, relying as they did on a variety of different statistically-based, technically-generated processes³³ (Vigar et al:2000). This criticism could be, and has been, equally well levelled at *ucs* (*TtP*).

Thirdly, it was criticised for the product in terms of the numbers of dwellings built. Here it was highlighted that there was a shortfall in the amount of housing being produced and the amount of housing actually needed (e.g. Hooper:1996). A discrepancy between housing tenures, generating increasingly wide housing polarisations (Hooper:1996), and an increasing shortfall (or non-provision) in affordable housing - under-providing for those in most housing need (Holmans:1995) - was also noted.³⁴ This, it was argued, was generating a mismatch between housing types and households - with more family housing being produced than housing for smaller households (e.g. North East Arup Study p.5)

³² Favouring the housebuilders interests (Rydin:1998).

³³ E.g, the census, the household projections, the amount of housing needed, etc.

³⁴ Here there has been considerable debate on the provision of affordable housing which Farthing and Ashley (2002 p.48) noted was 'a major change from the land-use focus of planning to embrace social considerations'. This new emphasis on affordable housing raised definitional questions (Barlow et al:1994) and legal uncertainties (see for example Bramley et al:2000 and Gallent:1997). It was also seen to be under-provided by the market working in conjunction with section 106 agreements (Bramley and Watkins:1996), and was consequently thought to be short-sighted and inequitable- at the human level creating real difficulties for those least able to resolve them, and at a policy level generating an aggregated difficulty for the future. Here there were also issues about how housing need (see Holmans:1995) was officially determined through a housing needs assessment study (see Whitehead and Kleinman:1991; Bramley et al:2000). More recently, there has been a more forceful debate on the provision of affordable housing particularly in the South, notably in London, primarily because house prices are now beyond the reach of many 'key workers' (i) preventing key workers (often seen as professionals- teachers; nurses; police etc.) from taking up their tenure of choice- owner-occupation- in proximity to their job; and consequently (ii) creating employee supply problems, particularly in the public sector. This aspect of housing is an important element of the overall housing land debate, and may well have been exacerbated by the new system that has emerged (*PPG3:2000*- here Bramley et al (1995 p.83) noted that 'in areas where the planning strategy relies extensively on recycling of land within existing built up areas the ability to negotiate affordable housing will be constrained by high urban land values'. However, perhaps misguidedly, the main discussion has remained peripheral to the main discussion on *uc* and therefore will not be reflected on very fully here.

Even more importantly for this research, the system was also criticised for the impact it had on the housing-land market. Here Rydin (1988) noted that it skewed land designations towards house-builders' land banks, circumnavigating the need for individual site permissions, and that it increased the need to release additional land³⁵ particularly when production was slow.³⁶ Consequently, the CPRE³⁷ argued that the system increased land-take. Rydin thought that phasing would help. (Incidentally, this was introduced in *PPG3:2000*). In relation to this, Halcrow Fox (1996) noted that only 39% of the land used for housing was actually identified in statutory plans. This suggested to Urbed (1999) that whilst land availability studies were successful in identifying sufficient amounts of housing land they were less successful in locating it correctly- effectively exacerbating the land release problem identified by Rydin, but also bringing into question the accuracy of the land availability study.

Therefore, even before the announcement in 1995 of a predicted increase of 4.4 million households across the country, there were already a number of criticisms of the existing planning for housing system; and there were already sustainability issues that the system did not necessarily address, notably social equity issues (not explored here) and environmental issues relating primarily to land-take, and questions over the reliability of the land availability study. The predicted 4.4 million additional households waiting to be housed exacerbated this further (Breheny:1995a).

2.5 The Problem: The Predicted 4.4 Million Households

In 1995 the new housing projections appeared (in this research identified as *Household Projections to 2016*).³⁸ These were mid-census predictions based on the 1991 census data projecting existing trends into the future. These projections influenced the thinking on *uc* in two ways, firstly through their content- what they said about household size, household numbers and household migrations and location preferences- and secondly through the way they were used to formulate the future housing requirement and consequently the required house-building activity, its location and its scale. It would appear that the scale of the projections helped to highlight particular weaknesses in the process, thus precipitating

³⁵ Beyond the designated 5 year supply.

³⁶ To make up for shortfalls- here when designated sites were withheld from development, the local authorities met housing requirements by allowing housing on windfall sites.

³⁷ This is reflected in their recent 'Sprawl Campaign', where they challenge planning applications and monitor planning decisions, with a view to stopping development on greenfield sites.

³⁸ See chapter 1 (p.4) for an explanation of the referencing and chapter 4 *Figure 4.1* for a full list of the texts referenced this way. *Projections of Households in England to 2016* is referred to in this research as *Household Projections to 2016*.

the collision of the planning for housing discussion with the sustainability discussion (Bramley:1998), which resulted in changes being made to the planning for housing process, moving *uc* to a more central position, and altering its meaning in the process. As already mentioned these projections (*Household Projections to 2016* and *Household Growth*)³⁹ predicted 4.4 million new households (by 2016), created predominantly through changes in lifestyle. These changes included people living longer, and consequently needing to be housed for longer; people moving away from home and living alone before starting families; and more complex family structures produced through higher divorce rates, more transient cohabiting arrangements, etc. Therefore, although smaller, these households continued to have quite complex housing needs, not necessarily immediately conducive to smaller dwellings.⁴⁰ Simultaneously, the projections indicated two observable migratory patterns: a migration from North to South- the North-South drift (Champion:1996 p.8)- and an urban to rural migration- the urban-rural shift (Champion:1996 p.8), or counter-urbanisation.⁴¹

The accuracy of these projections has been challenged (Champion:1994 p.1516-1517; Hall R. and Hall J:1995; Blackman:2003 p.11), and Shaw C (1994) noted that:

the one certainty is that projections will to a greater or lesser extent turn out to be wrong as a forecast of future demographic behaviour.

Shaw C (1994), p.24

He also noted that within margins of error the range between the highest and lowest projections accrue to many millions of people.⁴² Moreover, the Office of Population Statistics (OPCS) (1993) admitted to some significant undercounting in the 1991 census, particularly amongst males in their 20's, i.e. one of the main single household groups estimated in the household projections of 1995. Hall R and Hall J (1995 p.53) suggested that this under-estimation might equate to one million people.⁴³ Hall R et al (1997 p.55)

³⁹ *Household Growth: Where Shall We Live?* is referred to in this research as *Household Growth*.

⁴⁰ E.g. an elderly couple with two adult children, one with his/her own family, may still want sufficient space to accommodate children and grandchildren, so may still need a 3 or 4 bedroomed house not a single or 2 bedroomed house, ascribed on their more day-to-day needs. Alternatively, a divorced home-working man may need space to accommodate his work, and his weekend children. On this point of increasingly diverse and complex housing requirements, Allinson (1999) looks at the different make-up of single person households, Hall P (1999) gives himself as an example, and Llewelyn-Davies (London SRQ Study p.11-12 - see chapter 5 for reference explanation) explores different single household scenarios. Hooper (1998) provides a literature review on single households in 'Home Alone', and Hall R et al (1997) looks at the geographical distribution of different types of single households.

⁴¹ Term first coined by Berry (1976).

⁴² Not households.

⁴³ Not households.

also highlighted an under-enumeration of elderly people, another of the smaller household groups. Moreover, Hall R et al also noted that London and the Metropolitan authorities gained from the 'finding' of the missing millions and the shire counties lost, effectively damping down (though not eradicating) the counter-urbanisation (urban-rural shift) noted elsewhere.⁴⁴

However, Shaw C (1994 p.31) anticipated that the census data and future projections would invariably be used by policy-makers as forecasts, not projections. Capron (1994) highlighted this difference between forecasts and projections when he pointed out that the projections' accuracy relies on influences such as policy remaining the same, but that inevitably policy-makers used the projections to change policy, thereby altering the reliability of the projections as forecasts in the process.

Amongst other uses these projections fed into housing policy (see Baker and Wong:1997; Green Balance:1994, Murdoch:2000, Shaw C:1994). Murdoch notes that:

despite the technical nature of the calculations the publication of these figures generated a great deal of political controversy

Murdoch (2000), p.508

This was partly due to: the figures' magnitude (Bramley:1998; Breheny:1999) which was primarily challenged on the basis of their accuracy. Secondly, it was due to the figures' use in the planning for housing system⁴⁵ which resulted in a challenge on and a change in the way planning for housing was achieved. Thirdly, it was due to the figures' distribution and impact (Bramley:1998)- with some authorities stating that they simply could not accommodate the additional numbers (see Grigson:1995; Counsell:1999 for examples).

On the issue of their accuracy Bramley and Watkins (1995) challenged the projections on a number of grounds: firstly, they noted a number of technical problems with the household projections themselves, and indicated that these projections were not policy-neutral. Secondly, they perceived a lack of recognition in the planning for housing process of the socio-economics of housing markets and their impact in household formation. This led to their third challenge: that the process produced a circularity- estimating the number of households, providing for that number and thereby producing additional demand for future

⁴⁴ Hall R and Hall J (1995) did not consider either counter-urbanisation or household numbers for housing; instead they were concerned about the distribution of grants to different local authorities on the strength of the size of population these authorities are supposed to have. Nevertheless Hall R and Hall J's observations on the inaccuracies of the census data can be applied to the household numbers given that they are both derived from the same base data.

⁴⁵ With the household projections forming the basis of the determination of the housing requirement, its scale and its location.

housing. Bramley and Watkins' solution was to scale down the release of land, and to have a more directed housing policy to provide adequate amounts of affordable housing.

Bramley augmented this previous report with *Housing with Hindsight* (Bramley:1996) which offers more practical and empirical evidence to his previous report. In it he reiterates claims of circularity- noting that absolute falls in household numbers are rare and that households expand to fill the available stock. However he conceded that the circularity is not complete,⁴⁶ but goes on to suggest that, within emergent growth markets, housebuilding exceeds housing projections and actual households follow- suggesting that circularity does exist, particularly amongst specific susceptible groups e.g. younger unmarried/childless adults, and is felt more extremely at the local level.

Taken together these two reports have received considerable criticism. On the issue of technical problems Bramley himself conceded that:

there is not an obvious alternative method which would be demonstrably superior, robust and capable of practical implementation at the national level

Bramley (1998), p.169

Raynsford⁴⁷ (1997 p.76) noted at the time that 'there was no credible basis for rejecting the 4.4. million estimate' as the government household projections tended to underestimate the figure, and that although it was high it was lower than other decades. Breheny (1999) also highlighted the relative similarity in terms of scale of the 1995 projections with previous ones. Therefore the scale, whilst high, appeared reasonable.

On the circularity issue, Raynsford's and Breheny's previous comments also apply, and Breheny and Hall P (1996) noted that accuracy problems at the national scale would be exacerbated at the local level. Additionally King (1997) made a number of criticisms,⁴⁸ and Holmans (Holmans:1995 and 1996), reflecting on the argument that more houses beget more households in the way that more roads beget more cars, concluded that there was no

⁴⁶ I.e. building additional housing to promote growth (e.g. Newcastle City Council's *Going for Growth Strategy*) does not necessarily result in increased household numbers.

⁴⁷ Then the Shadow Minister for Housing and Construction.

⁴⁸ King noted that (i) the levels of circularity identified were already known and were subject to authorities following the projections slavishly, and that (ii) Bramley did not claim perfect circularity – Bramley's evidence was open to other interpretations - notably that given the relatively high increase in female household formation related to changes in their economic status, and to social rented allocations policies, these do not equate to households being formed due to house-building activity; and that (iii) the projections could not be connected to housing location in the ways suggested, because of the delays between household projections and the building process and because of the constraining influence of planning policies. Indeed, he suggested that it is these constrictions which are forcing up housing projections elsewhere, as there is nowhere else to go, effectively arguing that if migration follows housing then it is planning which pushes housing in certain directions and the migration follows that.

clear link between household formation and housing supply,⁴⁹ and that no convincing evidence had been produced to support the hypothesis that housing provision generates households.⁵⁰ Here, King's (1993 p.109) comparative work on the relationship between household growth and household construction supported Holmans' position.

Moreover, Holmans suggested that a policy reducing house production to prevent household formation would not prevent households forming, it would merely prevent them from being counted, generating increased housing need, particularly amongst those most susceptible to housing difficulties, and would create more concealed families, whilst forcing up the value of the existing stock artificially. Here the moral issue of not providing adequately for the housing needs of the population was also highlighted, and it was this view that eventually prevailed (*Planning for the Communities of the Future* p.11).⁵¹

Therefore, on the issues of scale and accuracy the figures were accepted as given, albeit begrudgingly by some.⁵² However, given the scale of the projected numbers of households, particularly when migration trends were taken into account, the sheer volume of housing some authorities were being expected to accommodate under the existing planning for housing system effectively challenged the newly adopted sustainability imperative. Consequently some authorities sought ways of exploring how much additional housing they could accommodate within environmental limits- and adapted environmental capacity as an idea into *uc*, applying it to their particular locations to explore the limits of their ability to accommodate additional housing (Counsell:1999 and Grigson:1995).

On the issue of migration, the patterns of North-South drift and urban-rural shift were generally accepted. Here, as Champion et al (1998 p.72) noted, the urban-rural shift predominated. In both instances these migratory patterns were perceived negatively. The North-South drift was perceived as pressurising the South, particularly the South East, beyond its natural limits to provide adequate housing for both the indigenous population and the incomers; whilst concurrently it left the North bereft of much of its indigenous talent and ambition, and with a slack two-tier housing market comprising 'abandoned' areas amongst an otherwise effective housing market. All of these outcomes -the South's

⁴⁹ Here through comparing 1960s-80s headship rates with housebuilding rates, he found that the headship rates rose equally rapidly during the 1960s, 70s and 80s, whilst housing supply increased more rapidly.

⁵⁰ Bramley did not find this compelling- see Bramley:1998.

⁵¹ In this research referred to as *Planning for the Communities of the Future*.

⁵² Since 1995 subsequent household projections have for the first time reduced the overall household figure to 3.8 million new households (*Projection of Households in England to 2021*), which in the light of the previous projection of 4.4 million has alleviated pressure. In this research this set of household projections is referred to as *Household Projections to 2021*.

pressure and the North's abandonment- have had repercussions on the meaning of *uc* although the Southern pressure appears to have had more impact on the idea's formulation. The urban-rural migration pattern also put undue pressure on rural areas and communities, altering the very characteristics that people are supposed to be leaving to find (Champion et al:1998), and leaving the cities abandoned and empty (Champion et al:1998; UTF). Again the emphasis of these perceptions have had an impact on the eventual formulation of *uc*.

The predominant migration pattern -the urban-rural shift- is more complex than people simply leaving the city. Champion (Champion:1994; Champion:1997 p.77) noted a pattern of 'deconcentration' whereby the more urban a place the greater its population loss, with the pattern that the more urban locations (e.g. metropolitan districts) lost population to the less urban places, and so on, so that areas gained from areas more urban than themselves and lost population to areas more rural than themselves, effectively creating a 'cascade effect' of a net population consistently moving to more rural areas. The *net* population is important, indicating as it does that many people also moved into and around urban areas as well as left them, but that more people left them.

Allinson (2003a) noted that during the 1990s this pattern of movement continued and increased. Allinson (2003b p.133) also reflected that the drive behind this deconcentration was 'not a result of people moving out- but ...a result of people not moving in'. In contrast, the DETR (in both *The State of English Cities*⁵³ and the *Urban White Paper*)⁵⁴ indicated a slowing and stabilising in the population decline occurring in many conurbations, particularly their central cores, with some, notably London and more recently Manchester, beginning to show signs of increase.

Whichever way the trend is,⁵⁵ these observations have implications for the policy response to this urban-rural shift, which essentially changed the meaning and orientation of *uc* as an idea. The primary policy response has been to re-direct housing towards 'urban areas' and onto previously-developed land and buildings. However many have questioned whether turning this tide is possible, particularly in the light of policies' seeming inability to alter the North-South drift (Breheny:1997a, Champion et al:1998). Here the DETR's 2000

⁵³ In this research *The State of English Cities* referred to as *The State of English Cities*, cited in the bibliography under Robson et al.

⁵⁴ In this research *Our Towns and Cities: The Future- Delivering An Urban Renaissance* is referred to as *Urban White Paper*.

⁵⁵ On-the-turn or still declining.

findings suggest that it is. They have also questioned whether it is acceptable (see Breheny:1997a; Thomas and Cousins:1996 and Champion et al:1998).

The issue appeared to be more pragmatic than ethical,⁵⁶ with Allinson (2003b) considering what incentives might entice people back to the city, and Champion highlighting the necessity for policy to go far beyond land-use planning, to address the reasons why people are choosing to move, and to change their negative impressions of living in towns. Here the DETR presented a case that the change is possible in the *Urban White Paper* supported by *The State of English Cities* which reflected on both the shortcomings and the possibilities of England's cities; and in *Living in Urban England: Attitudes and Aspiration*⁵⁷ which reflected on people's attitude to urban living and what can be done to encourage them to view it positively.

In the midst of this counter-urbanisation discussion, Champion et al (1998 p.80) noted that 'uc' had centred on 'identifying the environmental limitations on urban development in the countryside', but that a shift had occurred to consider ways of increasing the capacity of urban areas through increased densities, reduced parking provision and a broadening of possible development opportunities (Champion et al:1998 p.81). This reflects the shift in meaning and method that this research aims to explore. Allinson (1999) also noted this shift whilst reflecting on the planning for housing system, highlighting some authorities' practice of indicating that they were 'full' to argue for reduced allocations. This description effectively portrays a situation of finite uc, drawing from uc's environmental capacity origins. In the next chapter, this will be presented as the Constrained Model of uc. However, Allinson pointed out that the government's response to this claim was to impose government figures on reluctant authorities, a practice which effectively invalidated the idea of finite uc as it was being touted at the time, suggesting an imperative for authorities to find additional housing from somewhere. In the next chapter this will be presented as the Opportunity Model of uc.

However, Champion et al (1998 p.81) went further to suggest that:

there are many different aspects to capacity including housing, social, psychological economic and environmental

Champion et al (1998), p.81

⁵⁶ For some there may be ethical dilemmas over the appropriateness of trying to socially engineer the housing market to make people live where they do not naturally choose to.

⁵⁷ In this research *Living in Urban England: Attitudes and Aspiration* is referred to as *Urban England: Attitudes and Aspirations*.

They also suggested that to address the issues fully, incidentally reversing the urban-rural shift, policy-makers would need to change the experiential quality of city-living: improving infrastructure, educational opportunities, health facilities, crime prevention etc. In addition to this they thought that the image of city-living also needed to be changed more cosmetically to make it seem more attractive. Taken together they thought this would increase the urban areas' capability (or capacity) to deliver a higher quality of life whilst realising its capacity to accommodate additional housing. Therefore, Champion et al appeared to extend *uc* beyond the physical land-take issue through the maximisation of urban land and buildings into more fundamental questions of changing perceptions, and altering urban conditions, reflecting as much on regeneration as he did on land-use planning, and noting the deficiency of only considering *uc* in land-use terms (This idea has been further developed by Cameron S and Gunn:2003 forthcoming).

2.6 The Solution

Therefore, in response to the household projections and their implied housing requirement, in the context of a growing sustainability agenda, finding a solution to housing this growing number of smaller households focused on location rather than scale. This boiled down to:

- A target on reusing previously-developed land and buildings to reduce rural/greenfield land-take- i.e. the majority of the households would be housed on reused sites and buildings, not new build
- An argued case for greater urban intensification, and the dismantling of the case of density and town-cramming (reflected in the discussion of environmental capacity), i.e. most provision of housing would occur in urban areas at higher densities than were previously accepted
- A drive to improve the cities' image and an 'urban renaissance' to enhance the cities' quality. i.e. housing would be directed to lively dynamic centres, not run-down poorly provided for neighbourhoods
- A change in the planning for housing process, with a greater emphasis on ideologically preferred locations and a smaller emphasis on the quantity of land supply

All of this had implications for the idea of '*uc*'; its meaning, its position in the relevant discussions, and the assessment methods used to discover it.

These points are discussed in greater length below.

2.6.1 The 'Brownfield Aspiration' – A Definitional Moving Target

In 1995 the DoE in *Our Future Homes*⁵⁸ suggested that 50% of all new housing development should occur on 'brownfield land'. However, by 1996 this figure was raised to an 'aspirational' target of 60% (*Household Growth*).

Shostak (1997) believed the targeted approach was '*simplistic and wrong*.' He argued that it focussed on the wrong issues- land-use rather than urban regeneration- and a target rather than the quality of the city. Raynsford (1997 p.76) concurred, noting that the aspiration was simplistic and damaging, as it failed to reflect adequately on regional differences, or on the impact such a shift in emphasis might have on a recovering housing market, whilst it simultaneously underestimated the impact of the diminishing numbers of easier sites⁵⁹ on the likely achievability of the target.⁶⁰ He also noted that this aspiration was aimed at city brownfield sites, and suggested that 'arbitrary aspirations could lead to town-cramming involving unacceptable development densities in cities'.

Meanwhile others commented on the definitional and numeric ambiguities of the target. Urbed (1999) highlighted the point that the target could relate either to the area of land-take, or to the number of units built.⁶¹ Others (see below) raised questions about what constituted 'brownfield' and what 'greenfield', while others, e.g. Hall P. and Lichfield (1999), reflecting on the geographical inability to achieve the brownfield target,⁶² effectively demonstrated the ambiguity of the application of the 'national target' which could either refer to every authority and region achieving the target or to the nation as a whole achieving it with some contributing more than others. Here the government seemed to expect all authorities to aim for it, but anticipated the North and metropolitan authorities being more successful in exceeding the target, allowing the South to be less successful. Yet, as Dewar (2000) pointed out, if homes are needed in the South, they cannot be provided for on previously-developed land in the North.

⁵⁸ In this research *Our Future Homes: Opportunity Choice and Responsibility* is referred to as *Our Future Homes*.

⁵⁹ I.e. those sites which were most easily developed at least expense, effort and risk.

⁶⁰ This was a common view around this period of time (see Best:1997).

⁶¹ If it referred to units, then higher densities on brownfield sites and lower ones on greenfield sites would reach the 60% relatively easily. If it referred to land-take then the issue became much more one of how to ensure greenfield sites were not utilised, and building at equal densities or higher on greenfield sites than brownfield to reduce the amount of greenfield land-take. In the event the target has related to units rather than area. This makes it easier to count-in the units derived from building conversions.

⁶² Here using the brownfield development figures, taken from UTF, they demonstrated that that where the housing requirement was highest, i.e. the South East, there was least opportunity, whilst in the North there was ample opportunity but less of a requirement.

Conversely, whilst some thought the 60% aspiration too high, others argued for its increase (to 75%). One such advocate linked housing to *uc* - *Housing and Urban Capacity*, placing *uc* in the centre of the discussion on the viability of increasing the amount of brownfield housing development, investigating local authorities approaches to *uc*,⁶³ and concluding that 75% was possible.

Cordy (1997) disagreed with this, arguing that there was 'no evidence' to support its claim for a 75% target. He thought that development-process difficulties, the urban regeneration process and people's conservatism about housing locations had been inadequately considered. He felt the emphasis on *uc* was misplaced, suggesting as an alternative an urban regeneration focus, and that:

... the percentage of additional households to be accommodated within the existing urban footprint should be a consequence of our urban policy- not its driver.

Cordy (1997), p.66

This suggests that Cordy saw scope for accommodating additional housing in urban areas; however, he did not see this being achieved chiefly through land-use policy. Moreover he was critical of the whole idea of *uc* on the grounds that:

... the concept of *uc* [was] too unclear to be used as a policy mechanism, as the Llewelyn-Davies Report⁶⁴ within the subgroup report show[ed]

Cordy (1997), p.66

Here Rudlin (1998) provided 'evidence' in *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Urban Reform*.⁶⁵ This concurred with Cordy in regard to tackling the public's negative attitude towards cities, but was more confident that desirable urban housing could be achieved. Rudlin postulated that the urban centre population loss identified by Champion implied latent infrastructure capacity, whilst criticising the past building trends as a poor measure for future possibilities. Rudlin's response to these issues was to advocate:

... other methods of assessing urban land capacity

Rudlin (1998), p.22

Here he noted that local authorities have:

⁶³ This report is reflected upon more fully in chapter 4 and chapter 5.

⁶⁴ This refers to the annex section of *Housing and Urban Capacity* (Annex C).

⁶⁵ In the way he wrote his report including a series of exhibits to support his case. His report remained primarily argumentative rather than evidence based- although he did draw on a variety of different reports.

...confused capacity- which is the potential to accommodate housing- with supply which is the amount of this potential released by the market within policy constraints

Rudlin (1998), p.24

This distinction is important. His report also explored the Hertfordshire Study, North West Study Manual and the London SRQ Study⁶⁶ emphasising their indication that considerable potential for housing development on recycled land through regeneration could be found.

This shows that 'uc' as an idea was also a response to this aspirational brownfield target. In this context *ucs* assessed the ability of built-up areas to provide adequate housing land to achieve the target. It was acknowledged that considerable confusion abounded amongst authorities with regard to the meaning of, and methods for assessing, *uc* (*Housing and Urban Capacity* p.L-D 25).⁶⁷ This situates *uc* firmly into the housing debate, and begins to shape it into a land-use assessment idea for determining development opportunities, although all were agreed that it was still a muddled idea.

Eventually, the relatively new Labour Government decided on a 60% target in *Planning for the Communities of the Future*, and the 60% related to the numbers of dwellings built on brownfield land rather than the area of land given over to housing.

During this period the target also varied in emphasis. Some emphasised 'brownfield,' often interpreted as derelict or contaminated land;⁶⁸ others recycling or reuse (Rudlin:1998); and still others the city or urbanity of the target area (Raynsford:1997; Rudlin:1998). Simultaneously, the target seemed to grow in definitional terms, developing from 'brownfield land' to previously-developed land in an attempt, firstly, to reduce the stigma sometimes conjured up by 'brownfield' (see Patchin:1991), and secondly, to overcome the limitations some gave it on the basis of their understanding of brownfield (Alker et al:2000). This extension also provided scope to include such sites as car-parks, and empty commercial space (Rudlin:1998). Subsequently, previously-developed land became previously-developed land and buildings. This emphasised the 'buildings' aspect of the brownfield development-opportunities drawing attention to such opportunities as flats over shops,⁶⁹ office and commercial space, housing sub-divisions etc. Finally, to the idea of previously-developed land and buildings, empty homes were added. This is not to

⁶⁶ All included in this research's survey- see chapters 5-8.

⁶⁷ In *Housing and Urban Capacity* there is a dual page-numbering system, with Llewelyn-Davies annexed report (Annex C) being numbered as Llewelyn-Davies page number. This has been abbreviated down to p.L-D number e.g. p.L-D 13.

⁶⁸ See Alker et al (2000) for a full discussion on the diversity of definition in the term 'brownfield'.

⁶⁹ Referred to as Living Over the Shop (LOTS) elsewhere in this research.

say that there was no consideration of these different housing development opportunities prior to their inclusion in this target. Indeed the reduction of empty homes target to 3% dates back to the same document as the brownfield target (*Our Future Homes*), but it shows a gradual extension of the category to allow units from a wider range of sources to be included in the ultimate 60% target, whilst highlighting possible opportunities the government thought that local authorities were overlooking.

As part of his 'evidence', and incorporated into the DETR's advice on completing an *ucs*, Rudlin⁷⁰ (*TtP*; Rudlin:1998, Rudlin and Falk:1999; and Urbed:1999) outlined the various development opportunities available, discussing their vital statistics, and challenging many of the cautionary points made about each one. This evidence is worthy of consideration as Rudlin's thinking has influenced government's thinking on *uc* through commissioned reports, and provides the basis for the development opportunities which were subsequently adopted in *TtP* investigated in more detail in this research in chapter 8.

Rudlin's challenging of practitioners' perceptions of particular development opportunities also fits with the *Housing and Urban Capacity's* (p.7-8) exhortation to challenge the traditional perceptions of the past, and forms an essential part in the process of altering the idea of *uc*. The particular perceptions he challenged were:

- *The diminishing stock and increasing paucity of previously-developed-land*

Many argued that the 'better' previously-developed-land had gone, leaving the least desirable stock still to be used (Best:1997; Hall D:1997). Rudlin argued instead that, firstly, large proportions of vacant land would not be classed as derelict,⁷¹ and secondly, the urban process constantly and continually produces new previously-developed-land as circumstances and uses change.

Here Alker et al (2000 p.63-64),⁷² after demonstrating the lack of a clear 'brownfield' definition, proposed their own. This reiterated Rudlin's opinion that brownfield land was not necessarily contaminated or derelict, but accepted contaminations'/derelictions' likely occurrence.

⁷⁰ Rudlin of Urbed, produced an unpublished report on *uc* in 1999, which was used as the basis of the government advice in *TtP*.

⁷¹ Here Rudlin used statistics from the DoE:1992: *Survey of Derelict Land in England* and the DoE:1990: *National Survey of Vacant land in Urban Areas in England* to show the difference. In this research these are identified as the *Derelict Land Survey* and the *Vacant Land in Urban Areas Survey* respectively.

⁷² They proposed that the key features of 'brownfield land' were that it was rural or urban, previously-developed-land and/or buildings, not in current use. Additionally, it might have some of the following characteristics: greenbelt, statutory contaminated land or land with some contamination, derelict, vacant, or partially occupied.

Where contamination occurred, Fulford (1998) noted that technically, remediation was possible, but that redeveloping contaminated sites incurred relatively high 'risks'- the factor, he thought, that ultimately determined the probability of site development. The literature identified these risks as: firstly, the remediation costs- which could escalate out of control (Fulford:1998); secondly, the liability if the remediation proved inadequate (see for example Dair and Williams K:2001 Fulford:1998 and Ward:1995), and thirdly, market uncertainty and delays due to possible site stigmatisation (Patchin:1991; Wiltshaw:1998; Fulford:1998), and also to legislative changes (Fulford:1998). Here Winter (1998) reflected on the different types of liability developers redeveloping contaminated sites are prone to.⁷³ He concluded that the site information was often hazy, the relevant legislation was complicated, and the costs and available resources lacked clarity. A fourth hindrance was the variable remediation levels for different sites, depending on their future use- with housing being one of the most stringent, and therefore one of the most costly (see for example Winter:1995).

As chapters 7 and 8 will demonstrate, these issues are necessarily incorporated into an *ucs* and reflect the *ucs* assessment, and its expression. Here the cost has been emphasised more than the risk, with the underlying assumption that, if profitable, the development risk will be taken. Rudlin also argued that these constraints should be perceived in policy terms rather than through exploring their particular characteristics (see chapter 5).

In relation to all previously-developed-land Adams et al (2001) highlighted ownership as an issue, seen as 'a major factor in the failure to bring forward sites' by the Civic Trust (1999, no page number). In Adams et al:2001, they considered the owners' ability and willingness to develop sites and concluded that the influences within this constraint were multi-faceted and complex- including factors within, and beyond, the owners' control.⁷⁴ From this they concluded that it was too simplistic to assume that owners would supply sufficient land to meet existing and future demands, just because the demand had been identified. This conclusion implies a shortfall.

⁷³ From criminal negligence to redevelopment costs.

⁷⁴ For example, they highlighted that an involuntary factor which hindered development was confused ownership rights, often caused by one government authority taking over from another without clearly stipulating which authority owned particular sites at the point of takeover- this the authors found effectively prevented development occurring until it was resolved. In contrast, some owners either attempted to ransom developers (if they owned the last piece of land) or perhaps chose not to sell at a particular time because they thought it might be more profitable to develop in the future. These would be voluntary factors which prevented development.

Here, then, there is a wide acceptance that development of previously-developed land is more problematic than that of greenfield, taking longer, costing more, for less certain returns. As a response, it is argued that policy should support such development (Rudlin:1998; UTF) and that part of any study determining housing development opportunities should consider the availability of previously-developed-land.

- *The redevelopment of council estates will create overspill households that will have to be accommodated in addition to the 4.4 million.*

A common concern was that council estates, and particularly high-rise flatted estates, were increasingly unpopular and in need of redevelopment. This, it was thought, would result in lower density redevelopment (i.e. fewer dwellings), creating overspill households that needed accommodating elsewhere, adding to the 4.4 million total (see Hall D:1997, Breheny and Ross:1998). Rudlin did accept that estates were often problematic, and needed redevelopment. However, he argued that this was an opportunity, not a threat, as it enabled authorities to provide more desirable designs at higher densities,⁷⁵ given that the densities on many high-rise flatted estates were lower than they appeared to be. Therefore he concluded that redeveloping many council estates ‘far from creating “overspill” households ...are a potential source of additional urban land capacity’ (p.36).

Recently council estates, and indeed wider urban localities, have indeed suffered from high vacancy rates and housing abandonment (see Mumford and Power:1999; Leather et al:2002).⁷⁶ Consequently, the housing stock is not necessarily analogous to the household population.⁷⁷ This suggested that rather than creating overspill, housing redevelopment in such localities, even at lower densities, would bring latent property back into use.

It was therefore concluded that it was wrong to assume that redevelopment exacerbated the housing requirement problem, suggesting instead that housing estate redevelopment should be included in any study looking at development- opportunities.

⁷⁵ Including low rise housing (i.e. not more than 4 storeys) and traditional houses with gardens.

⁷⁶ The case study authority refers to this report as the CURS Report, so this research has referred to it in the same way.

⁷⁷ Here Keenan et al (1999) have completed an interesting study on the mobility of households within this stock, observing the tendency for them to move from one newly developed scheme to another, exacerbating the problem of community instability, and perhaps highlighting some of the difficulties of ‘over-capacity’. This is an area where further research, linking the drive to increase urban capacity to the policy initiatives aiming to regenerate urban areas through additional housing and their actual outcomes, might be explored.

However, much of this latent stock is contained in the empty homes figures (see below) and therefore could be double-counted.⁷⁸ Moreover, sometimes housing estate redevelopment results in more dwellings being demolished than built, creating a net loss. This is reflected in the empty property figures as a reduction in vacancies when in fact it is a reduction in the actual housing stock. Yet, if the remaining stock is let more effectively, then redevelopment could still be assessed as contributing positively. These numeric anomalies show some of the difficulties encountered in the assessment of *uc*.

Rudlin:1998 also noted a number of development opportunities which have gradually been absorbed into the *uc* idea, although they were not included in the land availability study. These development opportunities, how they are perceived and the constraints hindering their future development are an important part of the *uc* assessment. Therefore they are considered in more detail in chapter 8, but are set into the wider discussion of urban housing development, and the limitations of the various development-opportunities here. These development opportunities included:

- *Improving the Use of the Existing Housing Stock*

The Empty Homes Agency (EHA) estimated about 750,000 empty homes in England alone in 2003 (EHA:2003a).⁷⁹ These it was thought could be used more efficiently (*Our Future Homes*; Rudlin:1998; *Empty Property: Unlocking the Potential: A Case for Action*).⁸⁰ This was reflected in the government's 1995 target to reduce vacancies to 3% (*Our Future Homes*). However, the ODPM in 2003a, *Empty Property: A Case for Action*, and in ODPM:2003b, *Empty Property- Unlocking the Potential: An Implementation Handbook*,⁸¹ recognised that the profile of empty homes was not straightforward, with the possible reasons for their continuing vacancy often being more convoluted and complex than many initially thought. Here Rudlin (1998) observed that early thinking blamed public sector inefficiency for high vacancy rates. However, more recently local authorities have worked hard and creatively to reduce their vacancy rates (e.g. Newcastle City Council's furnished letting scheme).

⁷⁸ Firstly as redevelopment units and secondly as part of the reduction of empty homes.

⁷⁹ This does include redundant floor space above shops and redundant commercial space- which begins to highlight the problem that many of the categories begin to overlap, causing some double-counting-magnifying the possible opportunities.

⁸⁰ In this research referred to as *Empty Property: A Case for Action*.

⁸¹ In this research referred to as *Empty Property: An Implementation Handbook*.

Despite local authorities' best efforts, in many localities vacancy rates have continued rising, resulting in localised area abandonment in some (identified by Mumford and Power:1999), so that current thinking is that vacancy rates are as strongly influenced by the perception and stigma of the tenure type and of particular localities,⁸² as by poor management.⁸³ This has also been identified as primarily a Northern problem (EHA:2003a), reflected in a localised housing market's failure, resulting in the locality rapidly depopulating and then being left to decay.⁸⁴

In addition to public sector vacancies -the epitome of vacant property-⁸⁵ Rudlin (1998) noted that in reality the private sector vacancy rates were higher in percentage terms. Here, EHA (2003a) concurred that 80% of all empty homes are in the private sector. As a response EHA (2003b) announced new research to explore the reasons behind private owners' choices not to let property, and possible incentives to encourage them.⁸⁶ Although a number of incentives have already been tried, e.g. changes to letting arrangements in 1997 (see Rudlin:1998), recent additional fiscal changes (EHA:2003a), and the ODPM further endorsed the idea of changes in funding arrangements and suggested more partnership working in ODPM:2003b (*Empty Property: An Implementation Handbook*).

Therefore, the policy to deliver the mutual solution of filling vacancies with the increasingly numerous smaller households falls beyond straight-forward land-use planning and planning for housing remits- the territory where *uc* as an idea resides- but more in the remit of urban renewal and estate management programmes. Nevertheless vacancies have been highlighted as a development that an *ucs* should cover (see *TtP* p.12) widening the remit of the *uc* concept, and altering the character of land use planning to include a more managerial element.

⁸² These perceptions can be transferred to institutional perceptions of the residents of such housing, for example when employers fail to shortlist on the grounds of a person's particular address, or when insurance premiums are particularly high due to the levels of crime, and in more informal social settings.

⁸³ There is a rapidly growing literature on the issue of housing abandonment, its causes and possible solutions, e.g. Mumford and Power:1999; Keenan et al:1999; the CURS Report (so named by the practitioners in this research's case study authority. This text is listed in this research's bibliography under its authors: Leather et al.)

⁸⁴ An extension of this research could be to explore how renewal strategies, such as the new Pathfinder Initiatives, could be utilised to release the latent *uc* found in low demand areas.

⁸⁵ Here it should be noted that not all low demand housing is public sector; some has been built by Local Housing Associations and others are owned privately.

⁸⁶ The proposal was developed by EHA, MORI and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF).

- *The opportunities for Living Over the Shop (LOTS)*⁸⁷

Rudlin also highlighted the extensive space available over shops, identified by Lowe and Petherick (1989), which Petherick (2001) estimated at 'at least half a million' units.

Here Petherick and Barnett (1998) noted a diversity of spaces, ranging from empty existing units -sometimes categorised as empty homes- through to redundant storage space ripe for conversion. Petherick (2001) also noted the adequacy of the existing system,⁸⁸ and provided solutions to particular difficulties (see Petherick and Fraser:1992). She indicated that the primary constraint was again owners' reluctance to develop, not the physical unit-related constraints. Both Rudlin (1998) and Petherick (2001) noted leasing agreements, security and management difficulties in particular, all addressed by Petherick's two-stage legal arrangement (see Petherick:2001).

Rudlin indicated the disproportionate effort needed to achieve a relatively low return (in numbers of units). The recent tax breaks (2001 budget), designed as an incentive for developers (UTF), may help, but these should be considered in the light of the questionable effectiveness of previous incentives (see Heath:2000; Cambridge Study).⁸⁹

Others have questioned the public's perception of LOTS (Arnot:2001), suggesting a possible image problem. O'Flynn (2000) demonstrated that poor perceptions can be redressed and that LOTS can be presented positively as a potential investment.

- *The desirability of converted empty commercial space*

Rudlin observed the increased conversion of historic industrial buildings: mills, warehouses etc., and the public's acceptance of these conversions, which he considered represented an acceptance of apartment living and of living more centrally- both important facets to changing the perception of city living. He also noted the financial robustness of this new housing form indicated by its retained buoyancy during the 1980's property slump.

Rudlin also highlighted a newly emerging conversion category- office space. A glut in the office market had emerged and the potential to convert offices into residential units

⁸⁷ Petherick refers to vacant space above retail space as Living Over the Shop- LOTS; DETR called this development-opportunity flats over shops (in *TiP*). In this research it has been referred to as LOTS.

⁸⁸ Here she noted that there was all-party support, people willing to rent, organisations willing to develop, as well as a planning system and a legal system which had sufficient powers to enable such development.

⁸⁹ See chapter 5 for a full referencing explanation.

became apparent. This was particular applicable to older, smaller offices which tended to be less technically advanced and consequently more obsolete (Barras and Clark:1997; Gann and Barlow:1997; Heath:2000; LPAC:1996).

Here flexibility was a key constraint. Firstly, with regard to the buildings themselves, some buildings proved more flexibly designed, and so more easily converted than others; with Barlow and Gann (1993) suggesting that whilst most technical constraints could be overcome, in some instances the adaptations were financially untenable.

Secondly, planning flexibility was also seen to be key. Here planning processes were characterised as cumbersome (Heinrich:2000), and their standards were considered restrictive. Barlow and Gann (1993), and University of Westminster's School of the Built Environment in association with Grimley and London Residential Research (1998) noted a polarisation in local authorities' approaches; some demonstrated considerable flexibility whilst others were more restrictive. Hirst (1996) suggested that by using temporary changes of use permissions planning flexibility could be so responsive that temporary market changes and owners' requirements could be accommodated, allowing offices to be converted into residential property whilst the office market was down, and then converted back on its recovery.⁹⁰ He considered the procedural difficulties of this, but overlooked the nature of the resultant residential stock with its built-in undesirable uncertainty for would-be-tenants.

Interestingly, as *TtP* encouraged local authorities to consider office conversion in their *ucs*, University of Westminster's School of the Built Environment in association with Grimley and London Residential Research (1998) concluded that whilst office conversion was a positive phenomenon, the office market was recovering, curtailing office-conversions' contribution to residential development (also observed by Chesterton Research:2002). They also thought the most readily convertible space had gone first, leaving the more difficult opportunities. Nevertheless they concluded that developers and planners viewed office into residential conversion more positively, making future development of this sort, as advocated by Rudlin (1998) more likely.

- *The Acceptability of Sub-dividing Existing Housing*

The increase in smaller households and the length of time the housing stock lasts has led to a mismatch between the residential units' size within the housing stock, and household size. This has enabled Rudlin to argue that the subdivision of existing larger

⁹⁰ Hirst argued this was possible through the use of general development orders.

houses would result in a housing stock that better fitted the current needs of smaller households. However, as already seen, many dispute the claim that today's smaller households need less space than yesterday's larger ones (see footnote 40). Furthermore, some authorities see their larger housing stock as an asset which once lost cannot be regained, and therefore are inclined to protect it (see the North East Arup Study p.14).

Nevertheless, Rudlin:1998 emphasised this development opportunity, citing Llewelyn-Davies' work,⁹¹ which really focused on density not subdivision, to demonstrate the possibilities. Llewelyn-Davies' more recent work for DETR (Llewelyn-Davies et al:2000) focused on subdivision and noted that conversion occurred in both directions, with flatted houses being returned to single units -creating a loss in the stock- as well as houses being converted into flats. Although apparently representing a loss of stock, this finding could actually prove favourable to residential subdivision, if it encouraged local authorities to be less protectionist towards their larger housing stock.

In this work Llewelyn-Davies identified the relationship between the local population trends, the local housing market, the existing stock and the locality's perceived image; and saw it as being instrumental to the way that subdivision was occurring.⁹² Again, a key finding was that such development needed to be profitable, and here they argued that grants might encourage subdivision, whilst the existing tax system⁹³ effectively stymied it. They also found the design and physical layout of the residential units hindered development, but again the main constraint emerged to be the reluctance of owners to develop, not the physical constraints.

- *The developability of car-parks*

A main reason for directing housing development towards urban centres, and an underpinning argument for the idea of *uc* (see chapter 4) was to reduce car use. This was primarily argued on the grounds that such development reduced the length of car-trips, and increased the use of public transport. However, Rudlin (1998) also highlighted the possibility of developing car-parks into housing. This he argued

⁹¹ For LPAC (London SRQ Study), JRF (Llewelyn-Davies:1994), and the North West Regional Assembly (North West Study Manual). This work focused primarily on density rather than subdivision.

⁹² Gosling et al (1993) also reflected on the impact of the market on the way housing is changed-concentrating on house extensions, particularly in relation to people's ability to move, and reflecting on why people chose to extend their houses.

⁹³ With VAT being charged on subdivision.

reduced parking provision at the point of destination,⁹⁴ which would act as a disincentive to car-use by increasing its inconvenience. At the same time the new residents in the new housing would find local facilities convenient and would use these, supporting local businesses, whilst again not using the car.

Rudlin's view was unsurprisingly supported by a Friends of the Earth (FoE) survey completed by Williams:1998, which indicated considerable car-park under-use.⁹⁵ This suggested that many central area car-parks could be changed into housing simply because they were surplus to requirements, before even reaching the point of increased inconvenience identified by Rudlin.

Despite this presentation of a win-win scenario through the non-availability of car-parking and its repercussions on local businesses, the development of car-parks into housing has been strongly contested, a point Rudlin himself conceded. Business communities have argued that often the existing car-park space was insufficient for their existing needs, particularly at peak periods, and that far from assisting local businesses by providing a more localised customer base, they lost the custom of passing trade due to parking difficulties; and other customers went to places where they could park easily, perhaps extending their car-journeys rather than reducing them.

This suggests that far from providing the sustainable and regenerative option proposed by Rudlin and Williams, the conversion of car-parks into housing may be detrimental to the very things it aims to benefit- the environment and the urban area. Nevertheless *TtP* has included it as a development opportunity to be looked at in an *ucs*.

- *The intensification of the housing areas*

Rudlin identified the intensification of housing areas as the development of small plots in already built up areas- infilling, building on garage-courts, on backland and in back gardens (see Rudlin:1998 p.42). This fits with Llewelyn-Davies' definition of intensification (London SRQ Study and North West Study Manual). Here he also included the redevelopment of existing housing at higher densities, which *TtP* (also authored by him) suggested was a separate development opportunity category to be considered in an *ucs* (see chapters 5 and 8).

⁹⁴ I.e. where people wanted to arrive and park.

⁹⁵ In support of this claim Williams D (1998 p.24) contended that European research has shown that over-provision of car-parking reduced economic viability by encouraging road congestion.

Rudlin cited the Hertfordshire Study as particularly demonstrating this development opportunity's potential, although Llewelyn-Davies' London SRQ Study certainly supported its consideration as well.

However, Rudlin (1998 p.42) also saw this development opportunity as being the 'most contentious... since it impact[ed] directly on the quality of life of existing residents', and it was also thought to be held back by the views of local authority planners.

In response to these concerns, *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.8-9) offered an improved urban centre through housing-led urban renewal; and Llewelyn-Davies, in the London SRQ Study (p.17-19), attempted to address them through reflecting on place quality. Here they discussed a number of design principles, and then incorporated these into a set of site designs of higher density housing for differently configured small housing-site. These they used to demonstrate how higher density housing could improve the locality, by correcting poorly configured infrastructure, and the misused existing spaces, whilst at the same time increasing the housing density. This was directed primarily towards a planning audience, to alter planners' views on density and town-cramming, and to encourage them to consider more openly the possibility of greater housing intensity (see section 2.6.2 below).

In contrast, the Hertfordshire Study directed itself to local residents and property-owners to demonstrate the possibility of small-scale redevelopment, encouraging them to feel that redevelopment was worthwhile. This attempted to address Rudlin's other concern that existing residents were negative about new and more intensive development, and that few would allow their own property to be used in such a way.

Whether this development opportunity is contentious or not, government has found the Llewelyn-Davies arguments in particular compelling, and has used them widely to support its own claims and argumentation of *uc* (see chapter 4), and has included the development opportunity into its advice for *ucs* (see chapters 5 and 8).

This shows that the idea of the 60% target developed to incorporate a much wider set of development-opportunities than were previously considered in the land availability study. Some of these development-opportunities were considered in brownfield studies, but in these the emphasis was still on land, often omitting some opportunities (e.g. the

redevelopment-of-existing-housing and empty-homes).⁹⁶ Therefore, the land availability study became increasingly inappropriate as a way of determining housing site designations. The *ucs* filled this gap, and as this research will make apparent, these *ucs* have evolved a long way from their initial concern over environmental constraints to focus now on development opportunity.

2.6.2 Density

As previously mentioned in section 2.2, compact cities have been highlighted as a possible sustainable solution. This implies that cities are developed and used at a higher intensity than they are currently, and it also implies that this greater intensity is acceptable to, and accepted by society. Encapsulated in this idea of greater urban intensity is the idea that housing development should occur at higher densities, and that consequently people should live in closer proximity to each other. Therefore it has become increasingly important for practitioners and academics to reflect on how density has been measured and perceived in the past and how this should be done in the future.

Here Rudlin (1998), taking his ideas from Scoffham and Vale (1996) made a distinction between intensity - which he related to a 'subjective measure of "built-up-ness" or how busy a place feels,' and density - which he related to a quantitative measure of the amount of housing, people or units used for other uses within a given area. This accords with Jacobs A and Appleyard's (1987) distinction where they highlight that density relates to numbers of people or buildings and intensity relates to how people use an area- suggesting interaction. In contrast, Burton E (2002) reflects on the measuring of compaction, using a range of measures to draw out the 'different aspects of compactness' which included measures of both intensity and density.

Measuring Density

In terms of measurement Breheny (1997b p.84) noted firstly that there are "measures" which refer to the range of ways in which densities might be recorded, e.g. dwellings per hectare (dw/ha), and "standards" which refer to a 'prescribed density level that planners attempt to achieve': He noted that density standards can be expressed numerically- either specifically (e.g. 30 dw/ha) or as a range (e.g. 25-30 dw/ha). He also noted that standards can be expressed 'non-numerically', e.g. "a level consistent with the surrounding

⁹⁶ This research will also show that development-opportunities have also been missed from *ucs*, but here there is evidence that a list of what should be included in what was considered to be an assessment of '*uc*' was beginning to be formulated.

residential area.” Here *Use of Density*⁹⁷ suggested this was the most preferred local authority option.

Breheny (1997b) also observed that some standards were expressed formally in plans whilst others were used as ‘notional standards’ to judge site capacities or planning proposals. His research also discovered that all densities were expressed in net not gross terms.⁹⁸ Finally in relation to standards, he noted that many authorities in 1997 were still using maximum standards, i.e. the maximum number of dwellings permitted on a site, rather than minimum standards -disallowing development of too few units- aimed at reducing underdevelopment of sites as suggested by *PPG3:2000* (minimum standard of 30 dw/ha). This has been supported by *Use of Density* which suggested that to use land more efficiently minimum densities would be helpful, but that higher densities (above 40-50 dw/ha) have diminishing returns in terms of reducing land-take, as other support facilities are increasingly needed and therefore have to be included.

Density can be a measure of the population inhabiting or frequenting a locality. In these instances it is measured in the number of persons per hectare (p/ha or pph- see for example Fulford:1996 p.129 and Jenks:2000 p.246). *Use of Density* noted that this was common practice in the 1960s and it is Barton’s (1995) preferred measure, because it equates better to the population required to maintain services and facilities. Burton E (2002 p.211) in her work on measuring urban compaction, noted that high density related more usually to population, in contrast to Breheny’s (1997b) emphasis on dwellings,⁹⁹ and that it was particularly useful when considering the viability of facilities and services.

Alternatively the more usual numerical measure, according to Breheny:1997b, gives net dwellings per hectare (dw/ha) or acre,¹⁰⁰ which can be applied to a site or to an area. Breheny notes that this measure, although popular, is inflexible. Alternatively, the usual London measure is habitable rooms per hectare (hr/ha), and in two authorities in 1997,¹⁰¹ bedspaces were being used (bs/ha). In this research the chosen measure is dwellings per

⁹⁷ In this research DETR (1998) *The Use of Density in Urban Planning* is referred to as *Use of Density*.

⁹⁸ I.e. they were expressed after the land for infrastructure and service provision was deducted from the site area.

⁹⁹ This may be a reflection of the information they were respectively looking at. Here Burton is discussing academic and some government literature whilst Breheny is reflecting primarily upon local authority practice.

¹⁰⁰ Less usual but see for example West Sussex Study.

¹⁰¹ Sevenoaks and Bournemouth.

hectare (dw/ha) as this is the one most usually used by both local authorities and government to express both density measurements and standards.¹⁰²

The density measures make little distinction between dwelling types, be they flatted, terraced, semi-detached or detached, although higher density housing might indicate a flatted or terraced housing form. *Use of Density* (p.28) noted that density constituted a 'useful and intelligible shorthand for the form and type of development'. However Rudlin (1998 p.20-21) showed this could be deceptive, citing Hulme in Manchester as an example of relatively low density in actuality which gave the impression of high density through its built form- bearing out Scoffham and Vale's (1996 p.66) point that 'density is meaningless unless related to built form.' This argued non-relationship between density, intensity and residential design has been developed further in the way that *uc* and the use of density standards are argued, and is reflected on more fully elsewhere in this research. Here it is sufficient to note that *uc* is measured using the same measurement as density -usually dwellings per ha (dw/ha)- which consequentially makes *uc* primarily a concept relating to built form and buildings rather than to people and urban usage.¹⁰³

These differences, particularly between measuring by population and by dwelling unit, are significant, especially when one considers how households and households dynamics have changed and how the relationship between housing density (dw/ha) and population (p/ha) has changed (Hall P:1999). The cumulative impact of smaller household size and sparser housing density ultimately result in much lower population densities than even the sparser housing suggests (Hall P:1999). In this respect, Rudlin's density gradient (Rudlin:1998 p.51), useful in many ways for demonstrating the historic and geographic differences in what is thought to be acceptable and high density, fails to reflect the differences in household size- treating it as constant when in reality considerable variation occurs both geographically and historically.

Hall P (1999)¹⁰⁴ went further, pointing out that demography feeds into use patterns which determine the facilities that are required, a point developed by many of the exponents of urban intensification through urban renaissance (e.g. UTF). However, the way people use

¹⁰² An exception will be made where the illustrative example from an *ucs* or other source is given in a different form.

¹⁰³ In terms of the take-up of services, facilities and opportunities.

¹⁰⁴ Hall P (1999) also noted a distinction in population terms between population density and household density.

space is very complex¹⁰⁵ and their responses to facilities in close proximity to their housing may not be those anticipated by those who organise space for a multitude of rational reasons.¹⁰⁶ This has repercussions on the anticipated viability of area improvements through the maintenance of facilities by the repopulation of neighbourhoods via higher density housing- one of the many arguments used to augment claims of urban regeneration through increasing housing in urban centres (UTF).

The Perception of Density

However, measurement is only one aspect of density, another is its usage by policy-makers and how the public perceive it. Here Travers (2001 p.23) reflects on the British perception of density as ‘an evil, irrevocably muddled up with overcrowding and nineteenth century slums’. Certainly, historically a main policy use of density was related to overcrowding and public health. Another was related to design quality, and, whilst distinct, these policies have overlapped and continue to do so. Consequently in the past, density has been primarily used as a shorthand to draw attention to poorly built, overcrowded, insanitary housing conditions that lacked adequate light, amenities and privacy, brought about by poor building techniques, inadequate public service provision and poor housing management and maintenance (see for example Wilkinson:1939), as much as by the high densities of both houses and population. During much of the last century considerable work was done to rectify these conditions left as a legacy of the previous period (see *Use of Density*). This included slum clearance and rebuilding new estates both centrally and on the urban fringe.

Density also became associated, sometimes as a causal factor, with psychological stress and consequent social malaise. Rusbult (1979) reflected on the crowding experiments being carried out in America at the time (e.g. Calhoun’s:1962 rat experiments), which suggested a connection between crowding and psychological stress and subsequent social malaise. However, Rusbult indicated that other researchers were challenging the connection (notably Freedman et al:1975 and Fischer et al:1975) on the grounds that it was not possible to transfer closed experiments on animal populations, e.g. rats, to human populations in existing urban conditions, as the connection was not evident in the way people behaved.

¹⁰⁵ See Jarvis et al (2001) for an analysis on the complexity of households’ use of the city in living their daily lives.

¹⁰⁶ For example people may choose alternative facilities from the most immediate ones because the required service (perhaps childcare) is on the way to work so is more convenient, or is thought to be better, more reliable, less costly, etc.

Freedman associated density with crowding. However, Rusbult (1979 p.732-733) found Freedman's definition of 'crowding' as 'synonymous with reductions in the amount of physical space per person i.e. directly related to density' too simplistic, reflecting instead that it needed to take account of other factors – group size,¹⁰⁷ noise, heat and resource availability¹⁰⁸ which affected behaviour and people's experience of their living environment. Rogers and Burdett (2001 p.12) noted that 'density has little to do with overcrowding or town-cramming. It has everything to do with design and the environment... it is possible to create attractive living environments, and to develop stronger and more vibrant communities.' Some of these findings and claims re-emerge in the assertions of town-cramming related to *uc* in the 1990's.

Given these dual concerns of building quality on the one hand, and people's and society's physical and social well-being on the other, density became 'a standard'¹⁰⁹ to prevent overcrowding, but other standards related to the habitability of the individual units also came into effect, incidentally influencing the density possibilities and the block lay-out- e.g. Tudor Walters Reports'¹¹⁰ lighting standards, privacy standards and internal space standards.¹¹¹ Simultaneously, authorities also tried to improve open space and amenity provision, and traffic safety,¹¹² all of which assisted in reducing housing densities (for examples see *Use of Density*). Consequently, throughout the period there has been a general reduction in densities, widely supported by planners and generally perceived as improving the pre-existing stock. This is one of the traditional planning perceptions that *Housing and Urban Capacity* suggested should be challenged (p.7).

This is not to say that this perception of density and crowding was not challenged; Jacobs J (1962) argued for housing in short blocks, concentrated (dense), with diverse mix-use neighbourhoods with some higher density residential accommodation to ensure an adequate mix of use throughout the day, and into the evening, and she argued against the large swathes of public green space and play-areas which she observed as being under-

¹⁰⁷ Which increases the possible social interactions.

¹⁰⁸ Here Rusbult reflected on some of the other research which explored crowding as it related to density, and other physical attributes, e.g. privacy, interior design, air temperatures and the availability of resources.

¹⁰⁹ An issue with the use of standards is that they indicate the least that can be acceptable, and whilst higher quality is hoped for and is often forthcoming, their emphasis is on preventing development from falling below the standard, not on achieving more.

¹¹⁰ Cited in this research's bibliography under Local Government Board (1918).

¹¹¹ All directed at the individual unit, but all likely to reduce acceptable densities.

¹¹² Through parking and road design standards.

used.¹¹³ Jacobs A and Appleyard (1987) also reflected on the 'grain' of the city, criticising much of what the standards had approved on the grounds that liveability tended to be lost,¹¹⁴ and suggesting that amongst other changes minimum densities should be used to raise densities. Here they suggest 15 dw/acre (i.e. about 30 dw/ha) and noted that this could be achieved through 'row-houses' (terraces). For them this density was a necessity to ensure the best attributes of urbanity. Many of these ideas have recently re-emerged and have been taken up by the UTF.

Therefore the perception of a dense city can be seen in two distinctly different ways. One perception emphasises 'town-cramming' (Evans A:1991; Hall P:1999). Rudlin (1998) observed that this concept of 'town-cramming' was usually not defined but was generally accepted as best avoided. This concept reflects an understanding of the city as having finite space, and a finite ability to accommodate further development and activity. Rudlin went on to comment that 'town-cramming' has often been associated with overcrowding. However he noted that overcrowding related to dwelling or area occupancy rates (p/ha) rather than to the dwelling units themselves (dw/ha), but that the argument was used in relation to the units. Here he demonstrated that even at densities considered high by British standards, the British currently live at much lower densities than many other countries (see Rudlin:1998 -p.51 exhibit 44- the density gradient). This then appears to be another argument centring on the difference between density- the number of dwellings, and intensity- the sense of activity. However, it is confused, because those claiming town-cramming do so not simply on the grounds of the density of dwellings but also on the intensity of the population's use of facilities, particularly transport, which is often characterised as congested. Here the argument is that the increased density of dwellings, and consequently of people, places demands beyond the infrastructural capacities of the various facilities; i.e. increased density makes intensity too intense.

The alternative perception contends that there is slack in the system. This is argued on the grounds that the urban areas once housed higher populations than they do today (e.g. Rudlin:1998 and UTF), supported by Champion's and others' evidence of counter-urbanisation. Indeed it has been argued that not only is there slack in the system, but that

¹¹³ Here many exponents of compact cities would differ, believing that green space is an important social amenity.

¹¹⁴ Here they applauded the efforts towards increasing liveability through standards, but noted that some of these were imposed excessively, and noted that if too rigorously upheld, they undermine the quality environment they seek to achieve.

to maintain the existing services, often more population is needed rather than less (UTF, Rudlin:1998, Rudlin and Falk:1999). Furthermore, it is argued that to make cities desirable places, they need to accommodate higher density housing in better designed neighbourhoods, offering greater variety, drawing from the literature of Jacobs J (1962), Jacobs A. and Appleyard (1987), Scoffham and Vale (1996) and others; i.e. an increase in intensity. Williams K (2000) and Jenks (2000) point out separately that different urban areas will respond differently to intensification, depending on their existing circumstances. Therefore, what may be town-cramming in one location may be acceptable in another, and this may have more to do with the locality's infrastructure and the residents' perception of change than it has to do with dwelling density *per se*. This reflects a different understanding of the city's ability to accommodate additional development, with an emphasis on its capability to accommodate more.

Further to these discussions, it should be said that whilst it may be useful to reflect on historic population densities in urban areas to gain some insight into the possibilities (as Rudlin 1998 does), historically people used urban areas differently from how they do today, and had different expectations of the city and its performance. Consequently, the points where congestion is likely to occur today and the perception of town-cramming by those who use the locality may be different from past experience and historic expectations.

From this it can be seen that town-cramming and *uc* often adhere more closely to arguments of intensity, centred on the population and activity.¹¹⁵ Consequently *uc* appears to be related more to population and the capacity of the infrastructure than to the number of dwellings. So in this instance, *uc* seems to be more linked to intensity than to density. However, as will become apparent in this research's survey (chapter 5-8), *uc* is measured more frequently (and without exception in the survey set) in terms of dwellings- the preferred density measure.

Moreover, the way this argument of density is framed in relation to town-cramming and the capacity for further development, and to the contradictions that lie within it, is critical to the perception of *uc*, as will be seen more clearly in chapter 4.

¹¹⁵ E.g. the UTF (p.61 figure 2.5) offered some different scales of *uc* related to different density levels (p/ha) linked to varying facilities, and suggested different facilities require different populations to be sustainable.

2.6.3 An 'Urban Renaissance'

The third part of the housing requirement, with its emphasis on providing housing in urban areas, appeared to be the regeneration of the city. Here it needs to be noted that urban regeneration and urban renewal have much more extensive literatures than those focusing on the implications of land-use housing policy. However for this research this part of the literature review has limited its focus to this aspect of the literature as it relates to *uc*.

As has already been observed, the counter-urbanisation trend (whether continuing or turning) had left the urban areas bereft of population; and here Allinson (2003b p.133) identified the problem as the inability to encourage migration into the cities, rather than a sudden rise in the number of people leaving.

In this regard, many have pointed to the tendency of the English to minimise their urban experience (Travers:2001 p.23) and their propensity to decry it; for example Amin et al (2000), Hutton (2000),¹¹⁶ and Rudlin (1998) questioned 'why do we so hate cities?'¹¹⁷ In response, many have reflected on the history of the city (Rogers and Power:2000,¹¹⁸ Rudlin and Falk:1999 chapters 2-4) and the way it has traditionally been portrayed through literature and art as a place to escape from (Rudlin:1998 p.9; Hutton:2000 p.vi). Rudlin's own answer with regard to cities today was that people perceive the city as dirty, noisy, stressful and overcrowded (Rudlin and Falk:1999 p.17), and that it increasingly became associated with enclaves of the poor. Others too have identified the level of crime and the perception of insecurity, lower educational standards and a general social breakdown and malaise (Rogers and Powers:2000); Some have cited under-investment resulting in poor infrastructure and congestion (UTF, recognised by Amin et al:2000). The DETR:2000 report *Living in Urban England; Attitudes and Aspirations* (p.4) cites 'poor environment', and notes that the more urban the area the lower the levels of dissatisfaction.'

¹¹⁶ 'The British and particularly the English have not taken their cities seriously. Urban life is regarded to be something to be suffered ... the tumult of the city is to be deplored and avoided' (p.vi)

¹¹⁷ Rudlin answered in Rudlin and Falk (1999)- here they outlined the historic growth in city-living, its change in character, and its changing role; and the evolving relationship between people and towns- the shift in high status locations from central areas to out-of-town localities resulting in the perception that (i) the city is bad; (ii) that high density is bad; (iii) a home-work separation; (iv) a reversal of polarity with the élite demonstrating status by living away from the city where previously they had lived close to it.

¹¹⁸ Who cited its rapid rise during the Industrial Revolution, the population explosion of the period and the squalid living conditions rapidly produced to house this population, with their incumbent disease and dirt.

Therefore:

in the wake of [this] long history of English anti-urbanism, the positive tone [of the UTF document] on urban possibility has much... to be welcomed

Amin et al (2000), p.1-2

The original remit of the UTF was firstly to 'identify the causes of urban decline in England and secondly to recommend practical solutions which would bring people back into English towns and cities' (Cooper:2000 p.212). In its culminating report (UTF) they presented a win-win-win solution,¹¹⁹ aimed at finding space for additional housing, reducing the degeneration of England's urban areas, and developing more sustainable ways of life, through developing the majority of housing in the city.¹²⁰ This, it was said, would reduce land-take and the impact of the number of additional dwellings on the countryside. It would also help to regenerate, through repopulating, our urban areas. It was also thought that it would produce more sustainable patterns of living (higher density living) and behaviour- particularly related to transport use (see for example Rogers and Burdett:2001).

For this solution the issue increasingly became a question of what could be done, firstly to restore confidence in the city and city living, and secondly to regenerate urban areas. These were seen as closely linked, and ultimately mutually compatible (UTF; Rudlin:1998; Rudlin and Falk:1999). They also became associated in *ucs*: London SRQ Study:1998, North West Study Manual:1998; East Midland Study Manual:1998. However, within this mutual compatibility there are some contradictions, reflective of the duality of the UTF's original remit, that help to explain the schizophrenic nature of UTF, which 'evangelistic[ally]',¹²¹ presented the city and city living as very positive on the one hand, whilst reflecting on the difficulties and drawbacks of city development and regeneration on the other.

In this document and others,¹²² the driving force of the argument was the need to re-populate the cities (reflecting the UTF remit). McLaren (1999) was pleased to observe that the UTF saw the increase in the number of households as an urban opportunity, not a rural

¹¹⁹ This solution was spelt out by UTF, but was widely supported (e.g. Rudlin:1999 Llewelyn-Davies in London SRQ Study and North West Study Manual etc.).

¹²⁰ Here Rogers and Burdett (2001 p.9) note that developing in urban areas provides the critical mass to make public services work more effectively, bring a sense of cohesion and community that contributes to safety and civic pride; what De Tocqueville called 'the habitat of association'. They can help generate the mix of uses, the sense of security and the quality of public spaces that makes urban living attractive, with shops lining the streets and homes overlooking landscaped spaces, parks and playgrounds. They have the potential to be ecologically sustainable, economically strong and socially inclusive.'

¹²¹ Here Prescott (1999 p.3) himself calls this document 'evangelistic'.

¹²² E.g. Rogers and Burdett:2000, Rogers and Power:2000 and Rudlin and Falk: 1999.

threat. Therefore considerable energy and space was given to re-imaging the idea of city living (as suggested by Champion et al:1998); and reflecting on how the under-used parts of the city -derelict land, empty shops, the poor quarters of the city- could be regenerated. However, in his critique of the report, Champion (1999) suggested that it was 'wholly insufficient' both in many of its recommendations: not considering the full implications of them, as well as omitting other possibilities; and also, in not being specific enough in terms of either the differing sizes and characteristics of towns or the variety of urban areas. Robson (1998 p.8-9), in response to UTF's underlying premise, whilst recognising the possibilities, also highlighted the fallacy of the position that repopulating the city inevitably produced these positive impacts by demonstrating that it could equally well produce the opposing drawbacks.¹²³

Whilst recognising the interconnectivity of the issues and the need for a multi-dimensional response to achieve urban regeneration the report's primary thrust in re-imaging the city and city-living was design-led (UTF). Cooper (2000 p.215) referred to a previous debate (mid-60s) and questioned what had changed. This concern is echoed by Amin et al (2000 p.3) also referring to the 'environmental determinism' of the 1960s, and Ravetz (1999 p.279), who reflected on this 'design determinism', noted that 'environmental quality is the result rather than the determinant of a well functioning society' and questioned whether it was design that drove people away.

Moreover Cooper (2000 p.216) lamented that the report was an opportunity lost as it relied primarily on advocacy rather than on evidence. Amin et al (2000 p.4) implicitly concur in noting the non-representation of the stress of the city,¹²⁴ or of the darker side of the city,¹²⁵ or of the unseen city.¹²⁶ Amin et al (p.4) also challenged UTF's implied 'attainable urban harmony' and its failure to address issues of power- the neutralising of public space and the implication that diverse groups would simply get on. Finally they criticised the lack of recognition given to the dynamism of cities- by which they appeared to mean how cities are used rather than how they are changed. Consequently, there is a general consensus that the report presented a design-led approach to regeneration, and a need to re-image the city and city-living.

¹²³ Here he suggested that mixed communities could become socially exclusive through gating; that the more affluent mixing with the less affluent might increase crime through the increase in crime opportunity.

¹²⁴ 'Searching for privacy, sanctuary and anonymity; coping with loneliness, fear and anxiety about being seen, heard and recognised; about jostling for space, work, and welfare; about resentment, anger and intolerance' Amin et al (p.4).

¹²⁵ 'Illegality' Amin et al (p.4).

¹²⁶ Here they cite informal activities e.g. car boot sales, hobby networks and everyday activities.

On the content of the report, Cooper (2000 p.216) noted that much of the diagrammatic representation echoed previous city visionaries, notably Howard, but that it did not link the city to the hinterland in the way that Howard did. Amin et al (2000) Cooper (2000) and Regan (2000) all noted -and Regan (p.116) in particular lamented- the lack of further consideration given to investment in welfare and public services, community safety and jobs, a lament further echoed by Champion (1999) and Robson (1999 p.278). Roxburgh (1999) took this consideration further, wondering about the value of incentives for housing, and highlighting the need to generate wealth through employment generation, not housing, a view supported by Ravetz (1999), who challenged the assumption that urban repopulation was the solution rather than the improvement of local economies.

In contrast Evans B (1999) reflected on the issues in more of a land-use planning than urban regeneration way, as indeed UTF itself did in part, and suggested that the report provided a fresh opportunity to review land and taxation, particularly in relation to greenfield tax and environmental impact fees, but was pleased to see that although UTF acknowledged these issues, they were considered too complex to be fully explored in the pages of UTF, leaving the possibility that they would be properly explored elsewhere. Here Robson (1999) too was pleased to see the UTF considering financial incentives, reflecting his previous thinking in Robson (1998), which highlighted the need to think about the fiscal incentives of regeneration to enable the full *uc* of areas to be realised for housing.

In terms of regeneration, Amin et al (2000) here set the report into the wider government context, citing Cameron A.'s point¹²⁷ that UTF focused on 'urban' and the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) focused on 'poor neighbourhoods', echoed by Cameron S's (Cameron S and Gunn:2003 forthcoming) distinction between the UTF's emphasis on the physical built form and the SEU's emphasis on social issues. However, Amin et al:2000 noted the inclusion of housing in the report positively.

From this it can be seen that design is seen in the UTF Report as the panacea both for density and to achieve urban renaissance, and that urban density is seen as the panacea to sustainability through the reduction of travel and the panacea to housing the growing numbers of households on less land, and provided it is properly designed, the panacea to achieve urban renaissance. This too is reflected upon in the pages of UTF. It is also reflected upon in the idea of *uc*, with *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.L-D 6) suggesting

¹²⁷ Here Amin notes that Cameron A's point was in a private discussion between themselves, so Cameron A. has not been included in the bibliography.

that design could be used to experiment with densities, and could also be used to demonstrate how density could be increased without a loss of environmental quality. Consequently design has also become a feature of *uc*.

Under the auspices of changing the image of city living in order to draw the young single professional householder back to the centre, much has been done to emphasise design quality, again linked to density. Using what Goodchild (1994 p.144) has termed the 'historicist approach',¹²⁸ multiple examples (often repeated), including UTF best practice examples, have been given of successful high density housing, harking back particularly, but not exclusively, to the Georgian terrace (see for example Birbeck:2000; Rogers and Burdett:2000; UTF). Here design is seen to be key, both in terms of well designed personal spaces (dwellings- often smaller flatted or terraced accommodation), and in urban public space, to re-establish the buzz of the city (Scoffham and Vale's:1996 'intensity'); and success seems to be measured in the fact that public subsidy is no longer needed, as the market begins to take hold and as the location's sense-of-place and reputation draws people to inhabit the space. However, despite claims of affordable, desirable housing (Bloxham:2001) there does appear to be an issue over who the primary beneficiaries of such subsidies are, and of social exclusion, and in some instances social displacement;¹²⁹ and who is benefiting from this particular regeneration emphasis. However, since these concerns are not primary ones for land-use planning they fall beyond the remit of *uc* considerations.

2.6.4 Changes in Planning for Housing

Between 1999 and 2000 the government introduced a number of changes to housing policy mainly contained in *PPG3:2000*. In this new system less emphasis was placed on the household projections. They still play an important role in determining the initial amount of housing needed, but rather than a fixed total of housing to be provided there is instead an annual rate of provision, building into the system greater flexibility for accommodating the inaccuracies of the projections.

¹²⁸ By this Goodchild meant an approach 'that argues for a renaissance of the European city through the creation of higher density, pre-modern urban forms that are said to possess a richer and more attractive visual environment than has developed in the modern era.' (Goodchild:1994 p.144).

¹²⁹ Here Cameron S (1992) noted that in the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation's Newcastle docklands area development, displacement was low, because the space had been industrial not residential. Similar findings might be discovered when other residential development opportunities identified by *TiP* are explored. Certainly there is a possible research project, reflecting on the issue of displacement and social exclusion through the gentrification of the city centre, as advocated in the push to maximise *uc*.

The system also has a much stronger emphasis on the location and timing of development, and the new approach has become known as 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' (PMM). The land availability study has effectively been replaced by the *ucs*' directing more housing to urban areas, with the new regional authorities (in Planning Policy Guidance 11: *Regional Planning:2000*)¹³⁰ being charged with the responsibility to co-ordinate the completion of these *ucs*, and the local authorities (*PPG3:2000*) being required to complete these studies, drawing on the recently devised National Land Use Database (NLUD) and other data sets to inform their thinking. Together these *ucs* should be used to locate housing, directing it more towards urban areas, and giving room to reflect on the phasing of development.

Given the number of systemic changes, the government produced a number of additional guidance documents to reflect on the approach and delivery of different aspects of *PPG3:2000*. These included, in order of production, guidance on design principles: *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System*,¹³¹ although here English Partnership's *Urban Design Compendium:2000*, which emerged concurrently, was thought by some to be better. In October 2000 *Monitoring the Provision of Housing through the Planning System*¹³² came out and in December 2000 DETR produced *TtP* which gave better practice guidance on how to complete an *ucs* (reviewed in chapter 5); and in March 2001 the then-DTLR produced guidance on phasing development *The Managed Release of Housing Sites*.¹³³

The overall emphasis of the new system is to direct large proportions of the additional housing requirement towards urban areas and onto previously-developed land and buildings in a phased way, with more attention being paid to the actual rather than projected requirement, and to the location and the timing. Here *TtP* (p.5) puts *uc* and *ucs* at the 'very heart' of this new system.

Commenting on these changes, Brown (2001) noted that the intention was to make planning more responsive, whilst Lainton (2000 p.185) noted that it should do away with the rehearsal of housing arguments at different levels of planning inquiry (regional, structural and local), which he viewed positively. However, he anticipated difficulties on the 5-year monitoring, either because too much or too little land had been identified in a particular phase, or because of the continuing high use of windfall sites altering the

¹³⁰ Referred to in this research as *PPG11:2000*.

¹³¹ Referred to in this research as *By Design*.

¹³² Referred to in this research as *Monitoring the Provision of Housing*.

¹³³ Referred to in this research as *The Managed Release of Housing Sites*.

location and phasing figures. However, his overall thinking was that the approach had been clarified from its earlier renditions in *PPG3:(Draft)* and that it was good in terms of aspiration, but that 'it was less clear on how its changes were to be implemented'.

This lack of clarity was also borne out by the HBF (see McConnell:2002) in the immediate aftermath of the new regime, in reflecting on the responses of the planning system through appeals. Here they observed some confusion on the part of both planners and inspectors on how to interpret their pre-existing structure plans and UDPs in the light of the new legislation, and by Brown:2001 as she reflected on how the new *PPG3:2000* should be interpreted in the light of the future planning changes reflected in the new planning reforms- the Planning Green Paper.

Nevertheless they all highlighted the fact that this was a wholly new approach to planning for housing, much more dramatic than the previous generation of policy guidance, and it was noted through exemplification (see McConnell:2002) that *ucs* were indeed near the heart of the new process.

2.7 The Consequent Need to Explore Urban Capacity

This review of the main issues contextualising the concept of *uc* demonstrates that, as an idea, it has been reflected upon differently in a variety of situations, and indicates that the concept has altered.

Originally, at the start of the 1990's, the concept was identified and used voluntarily, as a peripheral consideration to housing location¹³⁴ focusing on the local urban environment's capacity to accommodate additional units (see for example West Sussex Study; Connell:1995; Packer:1995; and Roebuck and Gurney:1995). In contrast, it has subsequently moved to a more central position in housing policy, focusing on locating an adequate number of sites to provide for future housing development within the urban areas (*PPG3:2000* and *TtP*).

Both these uses have situated *uc* as an idea firmly into the context of land-use planning. Yet, others have tried to draw *uc*, perhaps not entirely successfully, into the discussion of urban regeneration (UTF; East Midlands Study Manual; Hertfordshire Study; London SRQ Study; applauded by Davies:2000 (p.21). Here the emphasis has been that increasing urban housing accommodation can regenerate depopulated urban centres, without compromising on design (London SRQ Study; Crookston:1998; Crookston:1997).

¹³⁴ And sometimes other development e.g. the Halton Study (p.74-88 and p.110-120) explores employment opportunities.

However, in the formulation of *uc*, there are a number of ‘capacities’ not reflected upon in the concept whichever way it is determined; for example there is a social capacity touched on by the wider literature but not taken up by the *ucs*, which have primarily focused on the physical development issues.

The literature specifically addressing *uc* has focused on a number of key concerns. This relates primarily to issues of what *uc* is; secondly to the methods used to find it; thirdly to the use of the studies once they have been completed; and fourthly to the organisational relationships developed around them.

On the first issue -what *uc* is- the confusion can be seen in the way different studies have been named. Here there are examples of studies that have been called: urban capacity studies,¹³⁵ urban potential studies,¹³⁶ urban housing capacity¹³⁷ and urban housing potential studies,¹³⁸ all suggesting different emphases. For example the West Sussex Study was entitled ‘Urban Capacity Study’, and focused on the environmental ability of their locality to accommodate future housing development, emphasising its finite ability to continue to accommodate more.

In contrast, Baker Associates et al highlighted the distinction between this approach and their own, in the Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.3) where they noted that ‘capacity has a finite connotation implying a maximum amount that can be contained’. They argued that they were not considering this- in contrast to some of the other *ucs*- accepting as they did that the capacity would change ‘with changes in monetary, technological, social, political and environmental considerations.’ Instead Baker Associates preferred the term ‘potential’- highlighting the latent abilities of an area which might come forward given the right conditions.¹³⁹

However, many *ucs* have continued to call themselves ‘urban capacity studies,’ e.g. Stoke Study and Wychavon Study, despite being completed after *TiP* and after the Yorkshire and Humber Study drew out the distinction.

So, a number of studies all calling themselves ‘urban capacity studies’ consider *uc* quite differently. At the same time, some studies, calling themselves something slightly

¹³⁵ E.g. West Sussex Study; Halton Study, Cambridge Study - full title in chapter 5 and bibliography.

¹³⁶ E.g. Yorkshire and Humber Study is called ‘Study of Settlement Potential’.

¹³⁷ E.g. East Midland Study Manual; South Hams Study - full title in chapter 5 and bibliography.

¹³⁸ E.g. Sheffield Study; South West Study; full title in chapter 5 and bibliography.

¹³⁹ Clarke made the distinction first in Clarke:1997 (p.233); here he did not elaborate on the distinction, although he outlined a quite distinctive approach which he implied reflects more on urban potential than on *uc*.

different, reflected on *uc* in ways that comply with the recent *TtP* advice on *uc* assessment- suggesting that they are *ucs* in all in but name. Therefore, different *ucs* looking at the same thing are named differently, whilst named *ucs* use very different approaches to discover quite different things. This is where part of the *uc* confusion continues to lie.

Looking across the *uc* literature, there have been some notable contributors, mainly, although not exclusively, from private sector practitioners, including: Rudlin of Urbed, Llewelyn-Davies, and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). As already seen Rudlin¹⁴⁰ argued a strong case for urban intensification, and linked this work to his work on the method and content of *ucs*.¹⁴¹ Llewelyn-Davies have been influential to this work, producing persuasive reports of their own¹⁴² which have fed into government's thinking, helping them to construct a workable *uc* concept reflecting higher housing densities to incorporate additional housing, whilst maintaining design quality, reducing traffic and improving townscapes. Both these consultancies' work have focused on increasing the development-opportunities and arguing the possibilities.

In contrast, TCPA, supported by Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) focused on identifying and overcoming the development difficulties in a series of booklets. Here Breheny, as series editor (1997c and 1997d), identified some key questions, subsequently answered by a variety of specialists: Fulford:1998 focused on the reclamation costs and legal and liability issues of redeveloping previously-developed- land. Crookston:1998 demonstrated how design solutions, increasing individual sites' capacities, aggregated into a higher area capacity without loss of environmental quality.¹⁴³ Robson:1998 tackled the city regeneration context and suggested that employment was as important as housing. Shostak:1998 reflected on the necessary institutional arrangements required to maximise density through vision-based planning, and highlighted how trend-based land-use planning had institutionalised the continuation of the status quo; and Levitt:1998 considered the monitoring and measuring issues of *uc*, still emphasising environmental capacity. Breheny and Ross:1998 drew these papers' findings together in their culminating report.

Others concentrated on the so-called *ucs* assessment methods. Here some individuals and consultancies introduced their methods to a wider audience: space has been given

¹⁴⁰ Rudlin:1998 and Rudlin and Falk:1999.

¹⁴¹ Urbed:1999 feeding into *TtP*:2000.

¹⁴² *Housing and Urban Capacity; The Use of Density*; London SRQ Study; North West Study Manual.

¹⁴³ This unsurprisingly related more closely to Llewelyn-Davies' contribution, given that the author works for the consultancy- Crookston:1998; Crookston:1997.

particularly to the environmental capacity study for Chester, often cited as an early *ucs*,¹⁴⁴ although Roebuck and Gurney:1995 presented the method in terms of environmental capacity not *uc*. Connell:1995 presented the West Sussex environmental capacity study method which was then incorporated into the West Sussex Study, discussed by Counsell:1999 and Willoughby:1997, and included in the various surveys. The Hertfordshire Study, emphasising regeneration, was reflected upon by Caulton:1996 and was included in the various *ucs* surveys. Clarke:1997 and Crookston:1998 both reflect on their more exploratory design methods (developed through London SRQ Study and North West Study Manual, discussed in more detail throughout this research).¹⁴⁵

Besides these different methods, a number of different surveys were also completed and reported on. These aimed to ascertain then-existing practice (see chapter 5). Llewelyn-Davies' survey was the earliest one, reflecting on eight studies (listed in chapter 5), although Clarke thought a further dozen or so could have been identified (Clarke:1997 p.285). This survey highlighted particular approaches to *uc*, which have helped form the basis of this research and are more fully reflected upon in chapter 5. Entec and De Montfort University (1998, p.26) surveyed 15 *ucs* within their work for the East Midlands Regional Local Government Association, and Urbed surveyed 15 *ucs* as part of their work for the DETR which fed into the *TtP* document. More recently GL Hearn Planning (2000) has discovered which authorities have completed *ucs*; and Oxley and Golland (2002) in their efforts to develop 'a more robust economic viability appraisal' element to the *ucs* have reviewed a number of *ucs* to test the feasibility of integrating this appraisal into *ucs*.

All these surveys have concentrated on the 'what is being done' or the 'how to' of the *ucs* and their methods, although the Llewelyn-Davies survey began to reflect on the methods in terms of their meaning for *uc*. This research has built on this work, developing some of these ideas to analyse the method-types in particular (see chapters 5 and 7).

The Urbed survey ultimately resulted in the *TtP* advice (discussed in chapter 5-8): a better practice guide on completing an *ucs*. However Lock:2001 criticised this advice for failing to cover many of the more contentious issues, and the issues of cost- a point also raised by Johnston:2000b. Furthermore, Baker J:2001 noted of its advice that it:

[was] thinner than it ought to be on the issue of discounting where many potential problems lurk

Baker J (2001), p.15

¹⁴⁴ Included in Llewelyn-Davies' survey in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (Annex C), Entec and De Montfort University's survey for the East Midlands Study Manual (p.26) and Urbed's survey for *TtP*.

¹⁴⁵ This is explained and explored more fully in chapters 6 and 7 of this research.

The literature also considered the use of the *ucs*. Here there has been general agreement that *ucs* have been used as supporting evidence for local authorities' development plans at an Examination in Public (EIP) (see Connell:1995; Counsell:1999 and Willoughby:1997). These events represent a particular type of interaction between interested parties, notably the HBF, CPRE and other lobbyist groups and the planning authority, which centres on the establishing of positions and the contestation of views. In the early days of *uc* (between 1990 and 2000) these studies were voluntary in support of authorities' housing policy. Here Counsell:1999 and Willoughby:1997 noted their use to argue a particular case-usually that the urban area's space was finite.¹⁴⁶

More recently the government has made changes to their advice to planners with regard to housing (*PPG3:2000* and *TtP*). These changes have made the *ucs* a requirement, and focused it toward finding additional housing in urban areas. It remains in a policy support role, underpinning an authority's development plans' housing policy, but it has become the principal support- replacing the land availability study. In this regard, GL Hearn Planning (2000) recent survey of local authorities found that 62% of emerging plans would be supported by an *ucs*. Therefore *ucs* are still used to argue a contentious case in an antagonistic environment.

So effectively the *ucs* has now become the vehicle by which additional housing space in urban areas is found, where previously it was used to assess the environmental impact of additional housing. Here Lock:2001 noted:

...the DETR does not believe local planning authorities when they say their existing urban areas are full.

Lock (2001), p.79

Lock also observed the contentions which *ucs* were unable to override, e.g. how the policy decision of what was realistic was achieved, and how acceptable its suggestions were to local communities.

Perhaps one reason for the high level of contention to be found surrounding the concept of *uc* is because of its subject matter- the development of land, with its inevitable losers and gainers, and the inevitable disagreements this incurs. Another reason may be because of its setting- situated in the middle of the ratification process of local plans, which has been identified as contentious (see Vigar et al:2000). A third reason may be due to the changes

¹⁴⁶ Hertfordshire Study was an exception, arguing for brownfield use through regeneration. However district authorities contended that this was too optimistic and would lead to town-cramming, and the outcome was for greenfield sites to be released instead.

in its status- moving from the periphery to the heart of the planning-for-housing process, and the way this has altered the relationships of the stakeholders involved, and the concept's meaning and use.

Certainly, since the introduction of *PPG:2000*, as Thomas and Ansbro (2000 p.12) observed, there has been 'much activity from local authorities, consultants and developers,' probably due to the new government requirement of local authorities to complete such studies. This activity has influenced relationships between those interested in housing and its future location, and the concept of *uc*.

Johnston (2000b) also observed the change in relationship between the HBF and local authorities, and wondered what their new relationship might be. Kidston (2000) anticipated the likelihood that it would be more contentious, with both developers and planners producing separate *ucs* to challenge the others' findings. This he thought would mire inquiries into the intricacies of *ucs* methods rather than their content and the real housing policy. Recent practice suggests that different stakeholders (notably HBF and CPRE) have not carried out their own *ucs*, but that they are arming up to challenge the findings of the *ucs* being produced (see for example CPRE's:2001 and the HBF's:2001 *ucs* assessment booklets, which they advocate their members using to assess and challenge the local authority's *ucs*).

Thus, new roles and relationships are currently emerging between the various planning stakeholders - between the different local authorities, between the regional and local authorities, between the planners and the developers, the consultants and other key stakeholders - due to the changes in *PPG3:2000* and the new *ucs* expectations. These changing relationships would be an interesting avenue for future research.

Moreover this demonstrates that *uc* was and is a highly contested concept, which was and is still evolving. Indeed this literature review demonstrates that, in amongst the muddle of the concept's evolution, the idea has radically altered, but has somehow kept its name. This needs to be better understood, firstly in terms of the way it is argued (see chapters 4 and 9). Secondly, given the importance of assessment and the methods of assessment to the idea, the *uc* concept needs to be understood in the methods, to understand what is actually being explored (chapters 5-8), how it is being used, and how this has changed- assuming that it has (see chapters 5-8 and chapter 9). Thirdly, on the basis of what is being understood by *uc* currently, it will be possible to consider what it means now, what has been lost and gained along the way, and what the policy implications of this are likely to be now and in the future (chapter 10).

Chapter 3 The Concept-Models

Chapter 3 The Concept-Models

3.1 Introduction

This research is structured around the meaning of *uc*: what is meant by it, its evolution and the possible implications of the way this evolution has occurred on practice

By evolution this research means the way that *uc* has changed through time. The research also accepts that the evolving concept of *uc* was occurring in a rapidly changing context. Indeed it anticipated the probability that the interplay between context and concept has influenced their respective evolutions. However, this interplay and influence goes beyond this research's remit. This term, evolution, is not meant to imply a sense of improvement, or progression; instead it is limited to a sense of change, of becoming something other than what it was before, set in the context of time.

This research is also interested in the way this evolution has occurred. It was thought that different expressions of *uc* - the way it was argued, the methods and content of its assessment - demonstrate that *uc* as a concept whilst evolving in a similar way across these expressions has evolved at different rates, and has been influenced by different factors, so that what is talked about as *uc* in 2003 may not be the same thing as what is assessed in 2003. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 10.

Given its particular interest, this research fits into the postmodern perspective that accepts the relativity of ideas. It is underpinned by a foundational premise that all ideas, including planning ideas, such as *uc*, are socially constructed and changeable, and that they reflect as well as create the values and the thinking of the day in an ever-changing social culture and context. More narrowly, this research fits into the communicative branch of theoretical thinking (e.g. Healey:1997; Fischer and Forrester:1993; Mandelbaum et al:1996).

3.1 Expressions of *UC* and Windows into *UC*

This research's initial intention was to explore the expression of power-relations through the interplay of stakeholders' arguments as they related to the shaping of the concept of *uc*, in the tradition of other power-narrative theorists (e.g. Hajer:1995; Kaplan:1993).¹

However, early on in the research it became apparent that *uc* was expressed in different genres - through argument, and through assessment - and that this *uc* assessment could be

¹ This would still be an interesting study to do.

made using a range of different assessment methods (see chapter 6). Moreover it was observed by many (Baker:1998 in *Yorkshire and Humber Study* (p.3);² Llewelyn-Davies in *Housing and Urban Capacity*; and Urbed:1999) that these assessment methods expressed different perceptions of *uc*. Here Throgmorton's reflections (Throgmorton:1993) on survey research as a rhetorical trope were helpful, challenging as they does the idea that technical studies either are or remain neutral, as well as supporting others' claims that technical studies are inherently biased, e.g. Owens and Cowell (2002), Grigson (1995). The claim is effectively alluded to and accepted with regard to *ucs* methods by Baker (1998), Llewelyn-Davies (1997)³ and Urbed (1999) in their various assessments of the *ucs* methods they explored.

Therefore, prior to any research on the power relations of different stakeholders reflected in the conceptualisation of *uc*, given that the stakeholders were likely to express their thinking on *uc* partly through *uc* assessment (i.e. *ucs*), the methods and content of assessment found in *ucs* needed be explored to discover their particular biases. Moreover, this needed to be understood in the context of what was and is now being meant by *uc*, in the way that it was and is now being argued.

Therefore this research moved from considering the stakeholders, and the interplay of power expressed through the meaning of *uc* (i.e. a facet of the context of the concept of *uc*), to considering the content of the concept of *uc*, as it was expressed through argument and through assessment. Here again this research fits into a wider research tradition focusing on conceptual content rather than its context (see for example Gilbert and Mulkay:1984; Grint and Woolgar:1997; and Potter:1996).

Moreover, another early finding in this research, foreshadowing the actual research, was a relatively strong story-line (Kaplan:1993; Hajer:1993) depicting an evolution in the argumentation of *uc* (see chapters 4 and 9), an evolution in the planning for housing process, with key events e.g. *PPG3:2000*, which re-positioned *uc* in line with this argumentation (see chapter 2), and an implied evolution in the methods of assessment, suggested by Llewelyn-Davies: *Housing and Urban Capacity*, outlined more fully in chapter 5, and in the assessment-content of *ucs*, discussed more fully in chapter 8.

² *The Yorkshire and Humber Study of Settlement Potential feeds into the Settlement Potential and Development Options Study Final Report*. As *Yorkshire and Humber Study of Settlement Potential* equates most nearly to what *TtP* suggests is an *ucs*, it has been included as the *ucs* (i.e. the Yorkshire and Humber Study). However, it forms part of a larger document, and some reference is given to the *Settlement Potential and Development Options Study: Final Report*.

³ In *Housing and Urban Capacity*.

Therefore, the need to consider the temporal context of the contribution of, firstly, the argumentation; secondly, the *ucs*' methods; and thirdly the *ucs*' assessment-content, to the conceptualisation of *uc*, became apparent, and was depicted in a series of 'timelines'. A description of these timelines, and of their creation, can be found closer to where they are actually used (see section 3.4 below, and chapter 4 for the government argumentation timeline; chapter 5 for the *ucs* method timeline and chapter 8 for the *ucs* assessment-content timeline). Indeed as the research continued, the importance of these timelines became more telling, conveying as they do how the different expressions of *uc* - its argumentation, its *ucs* method, and its *ucs* assessment-content - have evolved in relation to each other (see *Figure 3.1*). Ultimately these express the pattern of evolution of *uc*, and whether it evolved haphazardly, uniformly, or in fits-and-starts.

Besides the way that *uc* was expressed (argumentation, *ucs* methods, and *ucs* assessment-content), this research also observed that there were a number of identifiable windows providing insights into *uc* thinking; and the research used three of these to explore the concept more fully.

One such window was central government's construction of *uc*. The importance of this window was due to the influential nature of central government's construction of *uc* on other constructions of the concept of *uc*.⁴ This window comprised of key government texts which illuminated government's argued case on *uc* (see below). These texts included government advice on the methods of an *ucs*; here government outlined a particular set of methods and indicated its particular preferences (see chapter 6). They also included government advice on the *ucs* assessment-content, identified in the government's advice (see chapter 8). Taken together, these demonstrate the government's conceptualisation of *uc*, how government's understanding evolved and how consistently government held its view.

The second research window providing insight into the concept of *uc* was the *uc* assessment tool: the *ucs*. The importance of this window was due to the *uc* concept's fusion to the idea of assessment (see chapter 4), and the consequent importance this placed on how it was assessed: i.e the *ucs*. As already mentioned, this research carried out a survey of *ucs* (see chapter 5 for this research's survey method). The various *ucs* methods

⁴ Here it can be seen that this research accepts as a given the asymmetric power of influence afforded to different organisations, with central government's being the most influential (in terms of influencing most other constructions of *uc*).

were explored⁵ and the *ucs* assessment-content was also explored.⁶ The findings in both these analyses (the *ucs* methods and the *ucs* assessment-content) could be set within a timeline to explore if, and how, the *uc* concept had evolved through the *ucs* methods, and likewise the assessment-content.

Moreover these two aspects of *uc* assessment (the *ucs* methods and *ucs* assessment-content) could also be set against the government's own preferences to reveal how consistently the government's construction of *uc* and *ucs* method preferences and content definition had been taken up by the *ucs*. From this it was possible to reflect on how consistently *uc* was evolving, and the implications of this on practice.

The third identified window was that of a local authority in the process of thinking through what was meant by *uc*, and completing an *ucs*. Here a case-study research approach was adopted (see chapter 9), and South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council (STMBC), this research's co-sponsor, was chosen as the representative of an implementing local authority.⁷ This window illuminated the context in which *uc* was being considered at a local level, and allowed the research to consider the impact of local considerations on the conceptualisation of *uc*. As with the analysis of the government's position it reflected on the way that *uc* was being conceptualised over the research period (1999-2003) and how this conceptualisation had evolved. Again from this it was possible to consider the evolution of *uc* as an idea in STMBC.

It was also possible to compare this with government's construction of *uc* to review the consistently the government's concept of *uc* had been taken up at the local level divide. Moreover, it was possible to explore the way that STMBC had considered the completion of their *ucs*, the methods it intended to use, and the assessment-content, and how these were discussed over the period.

From here it was possible to compare STMBC's construction of *uc* with that of government's, both in their respective argumentation of the concept and in the way they proposed that it should be assessed. This comparison revealed the similarities and differences in the concept's evolution in STMBC, as a northern local authority, and in central government.

⁵ See chapter 5 for a description of this analysis and chapter 7 for the analysis itself.

⁶ See chapter 5 for a description of this analysis and chapter 8 for the analysis itself.

⁷ Here it should be highlighted that although STMBC was chosen to represent an implementing local authority, it should not be assumed that STMBC is typical of all implementing local authorities, or indeed any.

Having observed this range of findings taken from three different expressions of *uc*:- how it was argued, the *ucs* assessment methods used and the assessment contents - and viewed through three different windows:- the government perspective, the *ucs* perspective and the local authority perspective - it was possible to reflect on the differences between how *uc* was evolving across these expressions,⁸ and how and why it changed at different rates. It was also possible to reflect on the planning processes in which *uc* is used (environmental assessment; planning for housing process); and other ideas to which *uc* has been linked (environmental capacity, land availability). This will be reflected upon in the conclusions (chapter 10).

3.2 This Research's Analytical Tools

To complete this analysis, an analytical method was required which could explore the different expression of *uc* (outlined above) and the perspectives of this research's different windows; and which could also accommodate the passage of time, and the evolution of an idea.

To reflect the issue of time this research organised the texts chronologically on 'timelines', which enabled the different texts - the government texts (first window), the *ucs* texts (second window), the case study transcripts and texts (third window), and their content - to be ordered and reviewed to observe what was happening concurrently in the different expressions of *uc*, and in the different windows.

However, this only partially alleviated the analytical problem, as it did not address the problem of how to explore disparate expressions of an evolving concept - *uc* - i.e. argued texts on the one hand and *ucs* methods and *ucs* assessment-content on the other, in order to consider how well they correlated to each other.

Here Rein and Schön's (1993) idea of framing⁹ was useful. This suggested that ideas can be named and framed (p.153), and that these frames present perspectives from which an 'amorphous ill-defined problematic situation can be made sense of.' (p.146). They presented framing as 'a way of selecting, organizing, interpreting and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading, and acting', and they suggest that discourses are framed, and that these frames are apt to shift (p.153). In the context of this research such an analytical tool could be used to consider the argumentation of *uc*.

⁸ I.e. whether it moved uniformly or disparately, in the same or different directions.

⁹ Rein and Schön (1993) defined a frame as 'a perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined problematic situation can be made sense of and acted upon' (p.146).

Faludi (1996) extended Rein and Schön's original metaphor of frames to suggest that they were used to:

give shape [and] exhibit patterns... determining the boundaries of... policy, and at the same time endow[ing] them with meaning.

Faludi (1996), p.93

Here he was discussing the notion of framing in the context of how planners use plans, maps and diagrams to represent their ideas, and he reflected on how planners frame ideas and how they use these methods of expression to demonstrate their thinking.

He stopped short of suggesting that diagrammatic frames could be used as an analytical frame to represent the argumentation of a policy. However, diagrams are often used to explain the relationships between different components being analysed, e.g. a method-process (e.g. Leicester/Leicestershire Study *Figure A*, no page number), or the relationship between different institutional organisations (Kitchen:1997 p.11) and institutional structures (Kitchen:1997 p.11).

Moreover Hendler (1996 p.406) presented a 'descriptive model' amongst a range of models she used to discuss ethical decision making, and she used this model to 'depict' the decision-making flows of planning in the context of professional planning life.

Therefore this research took this idea of framing and simply extended the imagery to include the picture within the frame as well as the frame itself. Using pictorial representations of the concept of *uc* enabled this research to present diagrammatically the relationships between the main components of the concept, and reflect on the types of interactions that were occurring between these concept components. These diagrammatic representations were further underpinned by their respective tables which reflected on the premises of the models, based on the underlying assumptions derived from the argumentation.

However, given the evolution of the concept, one diagram was not enough, as it only represented one construction of *uc* as depicted by one organisation at one particular moment in time. Therefore this research produced two descriptive models of the concept of *uc* to highlight the construction of the concept at different points as it was argued by government. These provided two extreme constructions of the concept borne out by the way it has been argued in the government texts (see below and chapter 4).

One presents *uc* as an idea that constrains development (the Constrained Model); the other presents *uc* as an idea that encourages and even enhances the occurrence of development (the Opportunity Model).

These models do not adequately represent all the evolving positions of different organisations, in all its different expressions, at all times equally well. Nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive, in that an organisation or expression may draw from both in part. This is why they are thought to be extreme positions, with most expressions of *uc* falling somewhere between them. Nor are they by any means exhaustive - the only models that could be drawn. However, they do represent two key constructions in the thinking on *uc* against which it is possible to set organisations' argued positions, *ucs* methods and *ucs* assessed content, to draw out the positions that these have taken, and how these have changed. Therefore these illustrative diagrammatic models act as something of a fixed point on the landscape from which positions can be mapped and explored within themselves and against each other.

From this it can be seen that the models have been produced through an iterative process with the analysis of key positions informing the creation of the models as much as the models informing the analysis. The models are not abstract creations, designed outside the analytical stage and then used to test certain pre-determined analytical assumptions or queries about the concept of *uc*. Instead they are reflective models that attempt to represent the key positions taken, and through comparative analysis to demonstrate how government has moved in its thinking over time and due to pressures brought to bear on them from elsewhere.

As models they should be viewed as illustrative or descriptive models of what pre-exists, not as preferred or alternative models of ideal constructions, nor models that somehow extrapolate into the future. Their function is to help in the process of reflection, description and analysis of the conceptual constructions being made by different organisations- nothing more.

3.3 The Models

Each model consists of two parts. The first part is a diagrammatic representation of the discursive relationships of key elements that tend to emerge in and around discussions on *uc*.¹⁰ These effectively cast *uc* into one of two key roles. First, that of *uc* as an indicator of constraint, effectively a threshold beyond which it would not be sensible to develop further, reflective of the idea of environmental capacity (see chapter 2). This research has called this model the Constrained Model (see *Figure 3.1*). Alternatively *uc* was presented as an unknown amount of land (and buildings) for housing in urban areas, with the suggestion that some development opportunities were not being considered in the process of determining local and regional housing allocations. This construction drew from the notion of urban under-use, the need for greater urban intensification and for an urban renaissance (see chapter 2). This model has been called the Opportunity Model. (*Figure 3.2*) This discussion's content is elaborated on below, and elsewhere in this research.

3.3.1 The Diagrams

Uc is predominantly about the accommodation of additional housing, notably in the urban areas. This is driven by the ongoing but recently¹¹ amplified concerns about the need for additional housing provision, and the problems of where such housing can and/or should be accommodated.¹² Within the diagram the ability of the household projections to go up and down is represented by the household projections being placed on wheels,¹³ the movement of which forces more or less housing out of the housing requirement,¹⁴ determined diagrammatically by the amount of tilt. The change from household numbers to housing requirement is depicted by the change from people at the bottom to houses at the top. The resulting housing (housing provision) showers down onto possible places that

¹⁰ The housing debate: household projections, housing requirement and housing provision; countryside protection often linked to urban regeneration, centring on ideas of design and quality of life issues and urban form issues linked to travel patterns. All linked to the idea of sustainability and resting on the assumption of urban under-use.

¹¹ Notably in the latter part of the 1990's, prior to revised projections in 1998, which reduced the numbers of households forming, and before the change of emphasis from 'Predict and Provide' to 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' - raised in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.10) (*sequential approach*), considered in *UTF* (p.213) embodied in *PPG3:2000* (par. 8).

¹² *Household Growth*; Breheny and Hall P:1996.

¹³ *Household Projections to 2016, Household Growth, Planning for the Communities of the Future and Household Projections to 2021*.

¹⁴ The process by which this is determined and distributed at regional level is outlined in *PPG3:1992*, critiqued by Hull (1998), Rydin (1988) and Baker and Wong (1997); and challenged by Green Balance (1994) and Bramley and Watkins (1995); and a new approach is suggested in *Planning for the Communities of the Future* (p.12-13).

might accommodate them. These are either the urban areas, in need of regeneration¹⁵ argued on the grounds of sustainable patterns of development linked to travel and land take,¹⁶ and improved urban design quality and opportunity;¹⁷ or alternatively they are the countryside, largely (but not entirely) protected,¹⁸ and consequently bouncing additional housing towards the urban areas- hence the trampoline.

In both models this accommodation of housing is set on arguments of sustainability.¹⁹ However, some take a cautious view, reflecting on the question of how sustainable it continues to be to accommodate additional housing in urban areas and the possibility that this solution, such as it is, might be finite.²⁰ This position is largely based on an acceptance of the presumption of urban under-use in principle but is cautious over how much under-use there is in reality.²¹ Consequently, *uc* becomes a finite threshold, by which it is determined whether the continuing accommodation of housing is sustainable based on an assessment of urban under-use and other criteria (environmental appraisals etc.), or not.²² Hence sustainability is diagrammatically represented as a seesaw balanced on urban under-use, which is assumed to be there but which needs to be determined. *Uc* itself is depicted as a line gauge (similar to that found on some weighing scales), or a finite threshold, indicating movement away from sustainability every time it moves from the vertical due to over- (or theoretically under-) development in either the urban or the country areas. This then describes the relationships reflected in the *uc* concept as constraining development- the Constrained Model (see *Figure 3.1*).

¹⁵ *Household Growth*: e.g. p.18 and p.28-34, UTF, *Urban White Paper*.

¹⁶ *Our Future Homes* (p.46), *Planning for Sustainable Development* and *PPG13:2001* (par. 12-17).

¹⁷ *Our Future Homes* (p.47) UTF (chapter 2), *By Design, Urban White Paper* e.g. chapter 4, esp. p.47-53.

¹⁸ *Household Growth* (p.23-7), *Planning for Sustainable Development*: (par. 2.1.5), *Planning for the Communities of the Future* (par. 66).

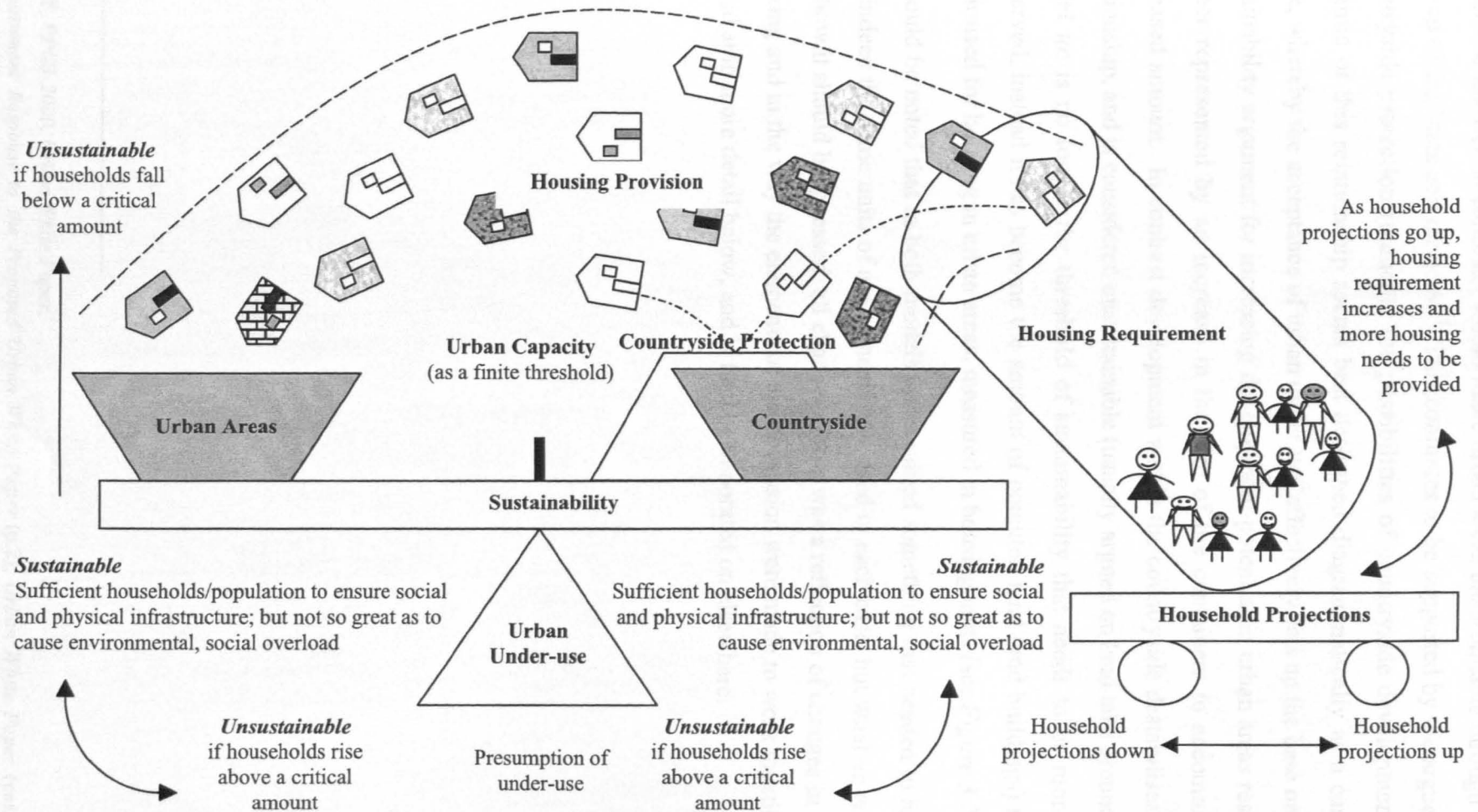
¹⁹ *Planning for Sustainable Development* (par. 2.3.1), UK Round Table for Sustainable Development.

²⁰ *Household Growth* (par. 5.27), *Planning for the Communities of the Future*, (par. 51) and *Planning for Sustainable Development* (par. 2.1.5 and par. 2.3.5).

²¹ *Household Growth* (par. 5.27), *Planning for the Communities of the Future*, (par. 51) and *Planning for Sustainable Development* (par. 2.1.5 and par. 2.3.5).

²² West Sussex Study (p.1) was interested in the likely *capacity* of windfall sites, and the possible social and environmental impact housing development would have, and noted concerns over the possibility of town cramming. West Sussex Study was interested in the environmental impact of future housing development.

Figure 3.1 The Constrained Model of Urban Capacity (UC) Diagram (developed from Government texts)



In contrast the Opportunity Model of *uc* treats urban under-use as an established fact,²³ and one that, if allowed to continue, would make urban areas unsustainable through the lack of take-up of facilities and services.²⁴ This continues to be supported by the argued need for countryside protection (reducing the possibilities of countryside development).²⁵ The dynamic of this relationship seems best described diagrammatically as a cantilevering force, whereby the acceptance of urban under-use effectively sets up the base on which the sustainability argument for increasing development-potential in urban areas rests. This is further represented by an increase in the size of the containers to accommodate this increased amount. In contrast development within the countryside destabilises the whole relationship, and is considered unsustainable (usually argued on land take grounds). In this model *uc* is no longer the threshold of sustainability that needs to be monitored and preserved, instead it has become the amount of potential land (and buildings) that can be maximised for housing in urban areas, measured in housing units (see *Figure 3.2*).

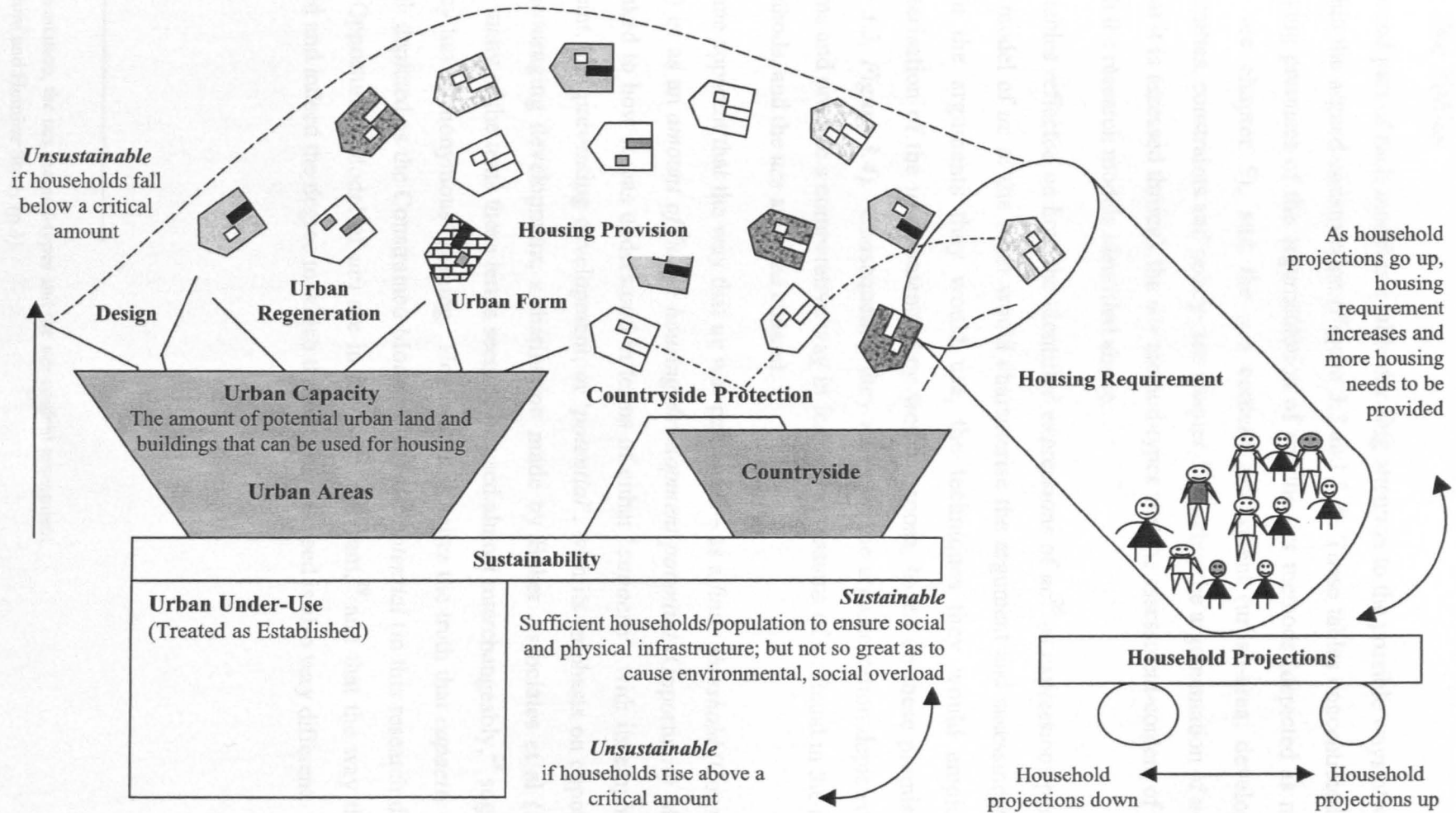
It should be noted that in both models *uc* remained something that needed to be assessed, and indeed the same units of assessment were used in each case, but what *uc* was, its role, and how it should be assessed, all changed. This was a reflection of changes in underlying thinking and in the way the elements of the discussion were made to work together. This is looked at in more detail below, and is further elaborated on elsewhere.

²³ UTF, *PPG3:2000, Urban White Paper*.

²⁴ *Government Response to the Proposed Urban White Paper* (p.2); *Urban White Paper* (par. 4.20) - the wastage of urban under-use and urban infrastructure (schools, shops and houses). *TiP* (p.15) noted the over-allocation for employment uses kept land latent.

²⁵ *PPG3:2000* (par. 22), *Urban White Paper* (par. 4.16).

Figure 3.2 The Opportunity Model of Urban Capacity (UC) Diagram (developed from Government texts)



3.3.2 The Tables

The second part of each model is a table drawing attention to the possible ways of viewing *uc* within the argued construction (Figure 3.3 and 3.4). These tables concentrated on the underlying premises of the argumentation of *uc*, the *ucs* methods (depicted as method-types- see chapter 5), and the *ucs* content assessment (urban-area, development-opportunities, constraints and policy- see chapter 5), linking the argumentation of *uc* to the way that it is assessed through the *ucs* method-types and the assessment-content of the *ucs* through the research models identified above.

These tables reflected on how the identified expressions of *uc*²⁶ as expressions pertaining to one model of *uc* or the other would characterise the argument and assessment of *uc*, through the arguments they would use, the techniques they would employ, the characterisation of the *ucs* contents they would impose, based on these premises (see Figure 3.3, Figure 3.4). Consequently they underpin the argumentation depicted in the diagrams and provide a comparative way in for the expressions of *uc* found in the *ucs*: the *ucs* methods, and the *ucs* assessed content.

It became apparent that the way that *uc* was perceived – as a *finite threshold* (Constrained Model) or as an *amount of future housing development potential* (Opportunity Model) - was linked to how it was understood in terms of either ‘*capacity*’, with its emphasis on constraint, and preventing development, or ‘*potential*’, with its emphasis on opportunity, and encouraging development, a distinction made by Baker Associates et al (1998)²⁷ Within many of the texts these terms seem to be used almost interchangeably,²⁸ suggesting that they have synonymous meaning. However, this belies the truth that *capacity* (in this research depicted as the Constrained Model of *uc*) and *potential* (in this research depicted as the Opportunity Model of *uc*) are in fact very different,²⁹ and that the way they are assessed and indeed the degree to which they can be assessed is also very different.

²⁶ Argumentation, the *ucs* method-types and the *ucs* content assessment.

²⁷ Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.3).

²⁸ E.g. the full title of *TtP* - ‘*Tapping the Potential- Assessing urban housing capacity: Towards better practice*’.

²⁹ Baker Associates’ Yorkshire and Humber Study p.3.

Figure 3.3 Constrained Model Premises underpinning the argument, method-types and ucs assessment-content, and how these are demonstrated in their respective contexts

UC Expression	Premise	Characterised by
Argument relates particularly to analysis in chapter 4 and 10	Uc is primarily known and finite. Development will reduce the quality of urban areas- through over-crowding and over-use. Protect urban area from being over-developed. The <i>status quo</i> is best. Policy is standard- which should be kept.	Arguments of town-cramming. Policies aimed at maintaining 'traditional thinking'- existing planning standards, conditions and designations. Conservative view on exploring policy alternatives.
Method –Types relates particularly to analysis in chapter 7	Existing data is complete and sufficient. Development-opportunities are known and limited. Development context does not change- or is too unpredictable to explore. Policy is accepted - in need of protection not change.	Known data is used- existing data sets, other surveys, new opportunities ignored. Methods tend to describe conditions or extrapolate findings. Methods may ignore the unpredictable/unmanageable. Existing conditions are accepted and applied as unchangeable in the methods. Policy is taken as given.
Assessment Content relates particularly to analysis in chapter 8	Urban area is limited. Development-opportunities known about, and other development-opportunities are not worth investigating. Constraints accepted as given and unchangeable. Policy accepted.	Urban area limited either through what it includes/excludes or through its characterisation. Development-opportunities are limited, known and difficult. Constraints including policy characterised as static- <i>status quo</i> , taken as given, remain unexplored. Constraints presented as insurmountable, and development presented negatively.

Figure 3.4 Opportunity Model Premises underpinning the argument, method-types and ucs assessment-content, and how these are demonstrated in their respective contexts

UC Expression	Premise	Characterised by
<p>Argument</p> <p>relates particularly to analysis in chapter 4 and 10</p>	<p>Uc is unknown but thought to be extensive.</p> <p>Urban areas are under-used and this has negative impacts.</p> <p>Change is inevitable, and can be desirable.</p> <p>Policy is presented as alterable.</p>	<p>Arguments that much under-use is hidden or missed because not looked for- should be explored.</p> <p>Arguments of underused space and its availability for housing.</p> <p>Arguments of underused facilities and their likely closure.</p> <p>Arguments to reflect on policy positions.</p> <p>Policies aimed at maintaining 'traditional thinking'- existing planning standards, conditions and designations.</p> <p>Conservative view on exploring policy alternatives.</p>
<p>Method –Types</p> <p>relates particularly to analysis in chapter 7</p>	<p>Existing data is incomplete and other development-opportunities may be available sufficient.</p> <p>Development-opportunities are unknown and subject to change.</p> <p>Development context does change, and this change can be positive and should be utilised, encouraged.</p> <p>Policy is under review, and is likely to be changed to encourage development occurring.</p>	<p>Need to explore other development opportunities- need new data.</p> <p>Methods attempts to find and reflect on new opportunities.</p> <p>Methods seek to explore alternatives with the intent to encourage positive changes which increase housing yields.</p> <p>Policy is not taken as given- rather the methods seek to challenge and alter it where appropriate, to maximise development potential.</p>
<p>Assessment Content</p> <p>relates particularly to analysis in chapter 8</p>	<p>Urban area is not limited, varied and under-used.</p> <p>Development-opportunities unknown, and other development opportunities are worth investigating.</p> <p>Constraints need to be understood and are likely to be alterable- Constraints may be negative and should be overcome.</p> <p>Policy has been constraining; it should be challenged and changed.</p> <p>Policy is alterable.</p>	<p>Urban area not limited, and may be extended through what it includes/excludes or through its characterisation.</p> <p>Development-opportunities not limited, not known and their constraints are seen to be overcomeable.</p> <p>Constraints including policy characterisation portrayed as dynamic, changeable and worth exploring.</p> <p>Constraints presented as overcomeable, and development is presented positively.</p>

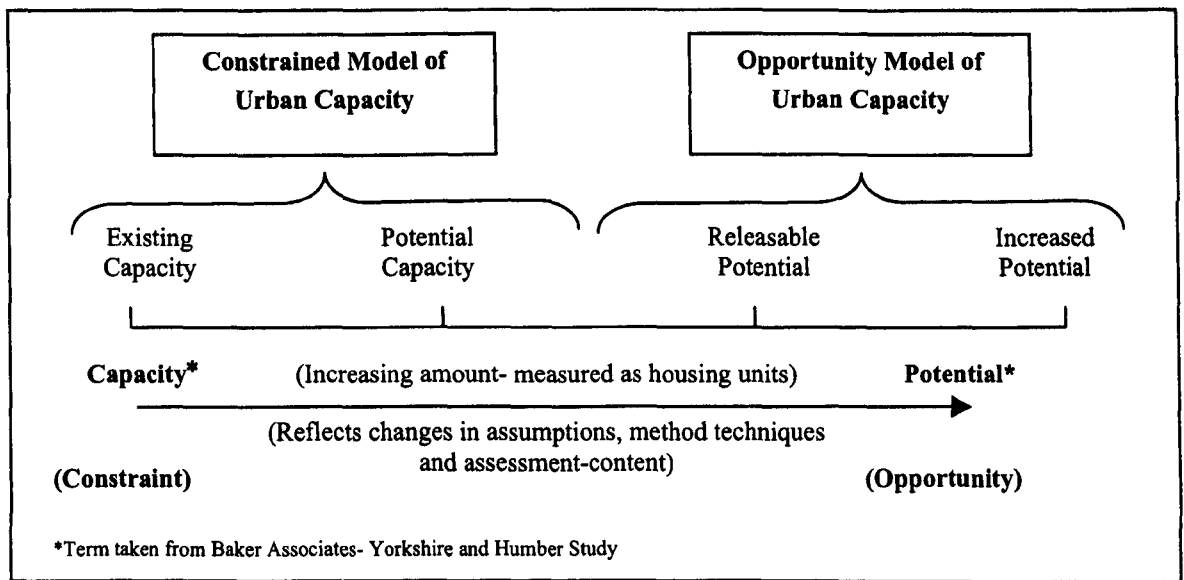
As already mentioned the second element of the models are the tables which outline the premises on which the various arguments are made. These underpin: the techniques used in the method types; and the characterisations of the various categories of *uc* assessment-content (urban area, development-opportunity, constraints and policy- see chapter 5 for full description). Here, as can be seen in *Figure 3.3*, the argument of the Constrained Model assumes limited ability to develop, and manifests a reluctance to allow development to occur. It assumes policy should be adhered to, and uses the *ucs* to support existing policy unchallenged. Here an underlying premise is that development is negative, particularly if not controlled, that development-opportunity is finite, and that many constraints fall beyond the remit of planning but those that do not should be controlled in the ways that they always have been, and that the *ucs* should strengthen existing policy claims and intentions.

In the Opportunity Model (*Figure 3.4*) the premises suggest instead that development-opportunities are widespread, diverse, changeable and can be altered through planning intervention, that development is positive and planning intervention to increase it may be advantageous. The Opportunity Model characterises the *ucs* as being explorative, challenging policy assumptions to explore new possibilities, and as being used to support new policy on the strength of its findings.

Within the *ucs*, these premises manifest themselves in the characterisation of the urban area, the development-opportunities, constraints and policy, affecting how these are argued about, how they are treated and how they manifest themselves. Similarly, the premises underpinning the method-types are also expressed through the way the urban-area, development-opportunities, constraints and policy are characterised and treated in the *ucs*. Consequently it is possible to explore how the *ucs* are understanding *uc*, through the way that they are characterising and treating the *uc* assessment-contents, and the premises underpinning the method-types techniques, and these premises in turn relate back to the model premises underpinning the key arguments of the Constrained and Opportunity Models.

The way that it is presented here suggests clear delineated distinctions when in reality the positions are much more blurred, with texts frequently arguing across the lines, sometimes even within the same text, and using methods that characterise and treat the *uc* assessment-content inconsistently. In this respect a linear continuum might have been more useful. Such a continuum is demonstrated in *Figure 3.5*.

Figure 3.5 The relationship of the concept-model elements when placed on a linear continuum



Here the two models have been subdivided to demonstrate that their respective positions are much wider and more relative than this research sometimes suggests. Here the constrained capacity model assumes at its most extreme that capacity is known about, finite and near to being reached (denoted as 'capacity' in *Figure 3.5*), and at its least extreme that some capacity may be unknown and available, but that it is still finite and will one day be reached (potential capacity). Likewise, the Opportunity Model at its least extreme (releasable potential) also accepts that capacity is unknown and will be forthcoming, possibly helped by some changes in policy, and that as it comes about this should be encouraged. At its most extreme (increased potential) the Opportunity Model expresses a proactive intention of intervention -through grants etc.- to bring forward hidden and latent opportunities previously unconsidered and unavailable.

However, in practice this subdivision proved too complicated as a way of analysing the complexity of the underlying values and assumptions, the method premises and techniques, and the characterisation of the *uc* assessment-content found within the different positions held. Hence its simplification into the two models which were subsequently used. Nevertheless, it has been possible to include something of this continuum format in the positioning of the argued texts in relation to each other and the models (see below and chapter 4) and in the ordering of the method-types in chapter 7.

3.4 The Use of the Concept-Models for Analysis

In describing the models here, this research has not drawn particular attention to how these elements and the relationships between them are expressed and argued as it is this argumentation of the concept of *uc* that will be explored as part of the investigation of the government's argumentation (chapter 4), the *ucs*' expressions of *uc* through the way it is assessed in *ucs* (chapter 7 and 8), and case study material (chapter 9).

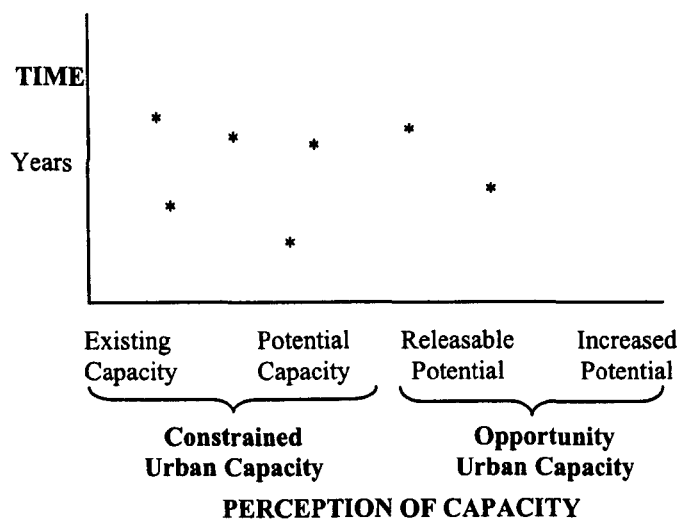
As already indicated, the models provide two fixed points against which the position of the different organisations can be observed through the argumentation of *uc* within its texts and discussions. From this it is possible to analyse and draw some conclusions about the content and argumentation of *uc* as it is manifested in these texts through setting statements and arguments (see chapter 4), method-types (see chapters 5 and 7), and method assessment-content (see chapters 5 and 8) against the models' positions to see which it most closely adheres to.

For this analysis, the texts relating to the way *uc* was argued³⁰ were summarised and the justification for the determination of their position was noted. This process drew attention to the thinking within a particular text and its emphasis in relation to one or other of the models. It also drew attention to some of the seeming contradictions within individual texts' conceptualisation of *uc* where they occurred. When different texts were set against the models, it was also possible to see the thinking across the texts, and to observe any patterns that might be emerging there, such as the shift away from the first model towards the second.

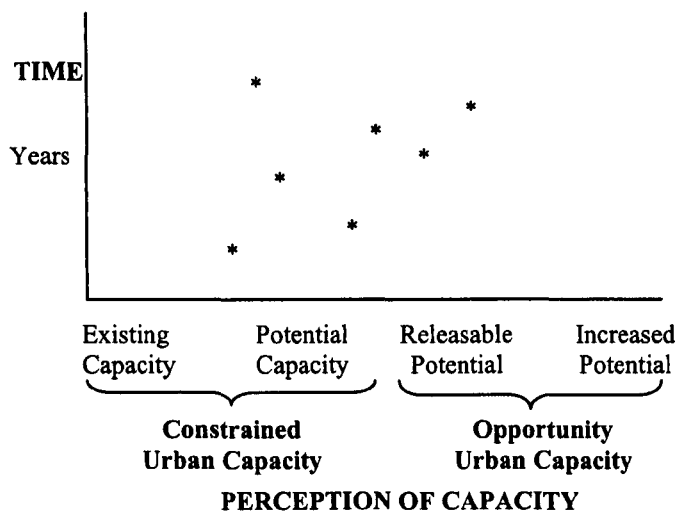
Within the expression of the government argumentation, these patterns can be more closely observed using a scattergram technique (see *Figure 3.6a and b*), whereby positions held are plotted in relation to the models against time, to see if a trend exists denoted by a linear pattern (see *Figure 3.6b*). However, here it should be noted that the *uc* models (identifying the perception of the *uc* in this diagram) have been constructed from the same texts, so the relationship between the texts and the model construction is likely to be strong.

³⁰ Notably for the analysis in chapters 4 and 9.

Figure 3.6 (a) random scatter indicates no relationship



(b) non-random scatter indicates relationship



This diagrammatic representation of the patterns of *uc* conceptualisation was limited to the government argumentation expression of *uc*. The other expressions of *uc*: the *ucs* methods and the *ucs* assessment-content were represented in different ways more able to demonstrate the relationship between the concept models, the *ucs* methods and the assessment-content (see chapter 5 for a full explanation of the way that these patterns were expressed).

Finally, when all the different expressions of *uc*,³¹ from all the different windows,³² are compared against these models, it reveals the similarities and differences between these respective conceptual constructions of *uc*. It also reveals any evolution in the concept that may be occurring, how and in what directions, and allows one to speculate on the implications of this evolution, such as it is.

³¹ Its argumentation, the *ucs* methods and the *ucs* assessment-content.

³² The government's perspective, the *ucs* perception, a local authority view.

Chapter 4 The Government's Argumentation

Chapter 4 The Government's Argumentation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the argumentation of *uc* by government as it is expressed through relevant texts when set against the two models of conceptualisation of *uc* (referred to as the *concept-models* and described in chapter 3). It looks briefly at the texts themselves before reflecting on the trend away from the Constrained Model towards the Opportunity Model that is observable when the government texts are taken together and compared with the concept models. It then explores the government argumentation of particular elements of *uc*, found within the models; its link to housing, the preference of urban areas development over that of countryside, the establishment of urban under-use, and the argument of *uc* as sustainable. This is presented descriptively in the first instance, noting changes in thinking along the way with examples from the texts themselves and set against the models. The chapter then considers the points of contention and how these elements have been refuted and argued away from the Constrained Model towards the Opportunity Model. The chapter culminates in a discussion of the repercussions this shift has had on the future thinking of *uc*, the methods used in *ucs* and the planning system, both in terms of its thinking and its practice.

4.2 The Texts

The texts were not equal in their authority or indeed their authorship - with some texts being written under commission and some by government departments - nor did they all perform the same function. Consequently they did not give equivalent weight to the idea of *uc* and its related topics. In some instances no mention of *uc* was made at all, but relevant ideas were discussed; in others *uc* is seen as a key part, but only a part, of the topic of concern, and in some it was the topic of concern, with other topics taking a subordinate role. The government texts are listed in *Figure 4.1*. The key texts are listed in *Figure 4.2* with their topic, emphasis and purpose indicated, alongside elements of text thought to be of particular relevance. These key texts are also numbered, so that they can be identified on the diagram (*Figure 4.3*) that reflects on how these government texts relate to the models over time as part of this research's analysis of the evolution of the concept of *uc*.

Key Texts	Text	Date	Identified in Research as	Referenced in Bibliography under
	<i>Rates of Urbanization in England 1981-2001</i>	1990	<i>Bibby and Shepherd (1990)</i>	Bibby and Shepherd
	<i>This Common Inheritance: Britain's Environmental Strategy</i>	1990	<i>This Common Inheritance</i>	DoE
	<i>National Survey of Vacant Land in Urban Areas in England 1990</i>	1992	<i>Vacant Land in Urban Areas Survey</i>	DoE
	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 1: General Policy & Principles</i>	1992	<i>PPG1</i>	DoE
	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing</i>	1992	<i>PPG3:1992</i>	DoE
	<i>Survey of Derelict Land in England</i>	1993	<i>Derelict Land Survey</i>	DoE
	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport</i>	1994	<i>PPG13:1994</i>	DoE
	<i>Sustainable Development the UK Strategy</i>	1994	<i>Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy</i>	DoE
	<i>A Guide to Better Practice: Reducing the Need to Travel through Land-use and Transport Planning</i>	1995	<i>Reducing the Need to Travel</i>	DoE
1	<i>Our Future Homes: Opportunity Choice and Responsibility</i>	1995	<i>Our Future Homes</i>	DoE
	2nd Report, Session 1995-96. <i>Inquiry into Housing Need.</i> (HC 22).	1995	<i>Select Committee Inquiry into Housing Need</i>	House of Commons
	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts</i>	1995	<i>PPG2:1995</i>	DoE
	<i>Projections of Households in England to 2016</i>	1995	<i>Household Projections to 2016</i>	DoE
2	<i>Household Growth: Where Shall We Live?</i>	1996	<i>Household Growth</i>	DoE
	<i>Rates of Urbanization in England 1991-2016</i>	1996	<i>Bibby and Shepherd (1996)</i>	Bibby and Shepherd
3	<i>Housing and Urban Capacity</i>	1997	<i>Housing and Urban Capacity</i>	UK Round Table for Sustainable Development
4a & 4b	<i>Planning for the Communities of the Future</i>	1998	<i>Planning for the Communities of the Future</i>	DETR
5	<i>Govt Response to the Environment Transport and Regional Affairs Cttee: Housing</i>	1998	<i>Government Response to Housing Report</i>	DETR
6	<i>Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice</i>	1998	<i>Planning for Sustainable Development</i>	DETR
	<i>The Use of Density in Urban Planning</i>	1998	<i>Use of Density</i>	DETR
7	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing (Draft)</i>	1999	<i>PPG3:(Draft)</i>	DETR
8	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 11: Regional (Draft)</i>	1999	<i>PPG11:(Draft)</i>	DETR
	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 12: Development Plans</i>	1999	<i>PPG12</i>	DETR

Figure 4.1(continued) The Government Texts

Key Texts	Text	Date	Identified in Research as	Referenced in Bibliography under
	<i>Projections of Households in England to 2021</i>	1999	<i>Household Projections to 2021</i>	DETR
9	<i>Towards an Urban Renaissance</i>	1999	UTF	DETR
	<i>Conversions and Development: Process & Potential</i>	2000	<i>Conversions and Development</i>	DETR
	<i>The State of English Cities</i>	2000	<i>State of English Cities</i>	Robson et al
	<i>Living in Urban England: Attitudes and Aspiration</i>	2000	<i>Urban England: Attitudes and Aspirations</i>	Todorovic & Wellington
10	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing</i>	2000	<i>PPG3:2000</i>	DETR
	<i>By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice</i>	2000	<i>By Design</i>	DETR
	<i>Monitoring the Provision of Housing through the Planning System: Towards Better Practice</i>	2000	<i>Monitoring the Provision of Housing</i>	DETR
11	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 11: Regional Guidance</i>	2000	<i>PPG11:2000</i>	DETR
12a & 12b	<i>Tapping the Potential</i>	2000	<i>TtP</i>	DETR
13	<i>Our Towns and Cities: The Future- Delivering an Urban Renaissance</i>	2000	<i>Urban White Paper</i>	DETR
	<i>11th Report, Session 1999-2000 Proposed Urban White Paper.</i>	2000	<i>Proposed Urban White Paper.</i>	House of Commons
14	<i>Govt Response to the Environment Transport and Regional Affairs Cttee: Proposed Urban White Paper</i>	2000	<i>Government Response to the Proposed Urban White Paper</i>	DETR
15	<i>Planning to Deliver: The Managed Release of Housing Sites: Towards Better Practice (Draft)</i>	2000	<i>The Managed the Release of Housing Sites (Draft)</i>	DETR
	<i>Planning to Deliver the Managed Release of Housing Sites: Towards Better Practice</i>	2001	<i>The Managed Release of Housing Sites</i>	DTLR
	<i>Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change</i>	2001	<i>Planning Green Paper</i>	DTLR
	<i>Planning Policy Guidance 13:Transport</i>	2001	<i>PPG13:2001</i>	DTLR
	<i>Empty Property Unlocking the Potential: A Case for Action</i>	2003	<i>Empty Property: A Case for Action</i>	ODPM
	<i>Empty Property Unlocking the Potential: An Implementation Handbook</i>	2003	<i>Empty Property: An Implementation Handbook</i>	ODPM
	<i>Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future</i>	2003	<i>Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future</i>	ODPM

Figure 4.2 A list of the Key Texts, noting the particularly relevant sections

Identified in Research as	Key Text	Relevance of Text
<i>Our Future Homes</i>	1	Policy document on housing provision, primarily focuses on sectoral distinctions in tenure but does reflect on housing and environment. Relevant text: p.46-48
<i>Household Growth</i>	2	Policy document on housing provision in light of household trends. Asks question of where should we live? Relevant text: par. 4.27-4.29; 5.26-5.29; 6.4-6.8; 7.6
<i>Housing and Urban Capacity</i>	3a & 3b	Commissioned report; survey on how <i>uc</i> was being considered, and reflections on whether this could/should be changed. Aspired to 75% brownfield target. Relevant text: whole report including Annex
<i>Planning for the Communities of the Future</i>	4a & 4b	Policy document on how intend to provide for future housing. Sets brownfield target at 60%. Relevant texts: par. 51; 53-54; 62; 64
<i>Government Response to Housing Report</i>	5	Response to government's intentions for providing for housing- supportive. Relevant text: par 44 but also elsewhere.
<i>Planning for Sustainable Development</i>	6a & 6b	Looks at how to develop more sustainably through land-use planning. Relevant texts: par. 2.3.7-2.3.11; par. 2.3.12-2.3.19
<i>PPG3:(Draft)</i>	7	Proposed guidance to local planning authorities on housing. Introduces a different approach which included the consideration of <i>uc</i> rather than land-availability. Relevant text: whole text but particularly par. 35-57
<i>PPG11:(Draft)</i>	8	Proposed guidance to regional bodies and planning authorities on the new regional planning bodies and their responsibilities. Relevant text: par. 5.2-5.3
<i>UTF</i>	9	Looks at housing provision in the context of regenerating cities and changing perception and experience of city living. Much of text relevant but particularly p.213-214
<i>PPG3:2000</i>	10	Actual guidance to local planning authorities on housing. Endorses and clarifies the new approach which included the consideration of <i>uc</i> . Relevant text: whole text but particularly par. 24-27
<i>PPG11:2000</i>	11	Planning guidance for regional and local authorities on how regional planning bodies should be organised, their remit, powers and responsibilities. Relevant text: par 5.04-5.05; 5.07; 5.11 and 5.13
<i>TtP</i>	12a & 12b	Provides advice on how to complete an <i>ucs</i> . Relevant text: whole text
<i>Urban White Paper</i>	13	Reflects on urban environment and sets out possible policy changes to encourage more city living. Relevant text: whole text but particularly chapter 4: par. 4.13-4.17; 4.18-19; 4.20-4.23 and 4.24
<i>Government Response to the Proposed Urban White Paper</i>	14	Response to government's intentions for providing for housing in the light of the new PPG3 – supportive. Relevant texts: p.2 and p.3 particularly
<i>Managing the Release of Housing Sites</i>	15	Provides advice on how land should be released in the new PPM conditions. Generally relevant.
<i>Monitoring the Provision of Housing through the Planning System</i>	-	Advises on how housing provision could be monitored in future. This monitoring is likely to be influential on future <i>uc</i> assessments, but the document says very little about <i>uc</i> itself, and so is not included in Figure 4.3.

Key Texts: the number relates to the document in Figure 4.3: 'a' relates to the main document, 'b' relates to the document's discussion of *ucs* where this occurs.

The key texts were determined through their usage of the term *uc*. Any text that directly discussed *uc* or *ucs* was included as a key text, with the exception of *Monitoring Provision of Housing*, which cited an example of the treatment of windfall by directing the reader to *TtP* for further information. This did not seem to contribute significantly to the discussion of *uc* as a whole and therefore the text was dropped from the key text list, although it did still contribute to the wider discussion of housing provision and so remained a text that was referred to.

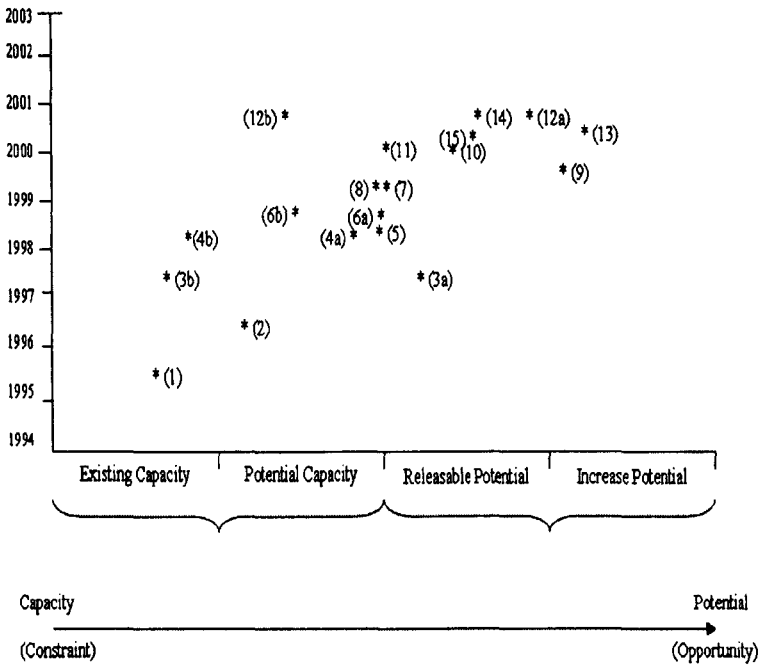
Conversely, two further texts were added to the key texts: *Household Growth* and *Our Future Homes*. Neither of these two texts used the term *uc* as they pre-date the common usage of the term. However, they both contained a discussion of the topics in which the term is usually found, albeit briefly in the case of *Our Future Homes*, and therefore it was surmised that they would probably have used the term if it had been more widely available and understood at the time.

4.3 The Trend

When the key texts' considerations of *uc* were plotted against the positions of the models on a graph against time the scatter suggested a strong correlation between the two (see *Figure 4.3*). Of course there were individual texts that seem ahead of their time in their thinking on *uc*, e.g. *Housing and Urban Capacity*, perhaps due in part to their particular concerns or remits. Conversely and unsurprisingly, there were other texts that seem almost to take a retrograde step in terms of the general trend of thinking on the subject e.g. *PPG3:(Draft)*. However, the scatter indicated a clear and steady move, across the government texts, towards the idea that *uc* is about determining the *potential* of the urban area to provide for additional housing. In addition to this most texts in 2000 reflect a position of *releasable potential* and one or two suggest a more radical change to *increase potential* through the aspiration of changing social behaviour and preferences¹ - i.e the Opportunity Model. This could be interpreted in a number of ways; either these texts are anomalies, not in keeping with the rest, or they signal the beginnings of the next step in a trend already heading in this particular direction. However these two more extreme views are interpreted it remained clear that there has been a considerable shift (see *Figure 4.3*) away from the more cautious note adopted in earlier texts, closer to the Constrained Model, towards the Opportunity Model (see chapter 3).

¹ It should be noted here that the purposes of the different texts may influence these findings considerably as their different remits and spheres of influence may help or prevent them expressing more radical views.

Figure 4.3 Graph showing the Government texts set against the models and time.



(numbers relate to the text numbers in Figure 4.2)

Within the texts it was also possible to see a sharp distinction between how the government perceived *uc* and how it viewed local authorities' perception of *uc* as explored in practice through *ucs*. Government (where it made comment)² tended to find that local authorities' *ucs* held to the perception of *uc* depicted by the Constrained Model, with some notable exceptions.³ However, it did seem to acknowledge that authorities had (generally) moved a little in their thinking from perceiving constraint in terms of *existing capacity* (utilising existing policies and trends) to *potential capacity* (exploring the possibility that there might be some opportunities previously missed).

Nevertheless local authorities, in government's view, appeared to have generally demonstrated a reluctance in adopting unorthodox thinking and alternative approaches, reflected generally in the *ucs*' methods of exploring *uc*: excluding development-

² This government perception is taken from about four different references, some of them quite oblique, and generalised into a single position for each text. It should be noted that within some texts the government does make quite positive statements of practice, but these tend to be presented as the exception, not the rule.

³ E.g. the North West Study Manual (Llewelyn Davies:1998), cited in *Planning for Sustainable Development*, UTF and *TtP*.

opportunities that could have been explored, using existing policy positions rather than challenging policy assumptions, reducing heavily and often not clearly the amount of *uc* found due to various development constraints, thus resulting in conservative estimates and unadventurous policies of ‘more-of-the-same’. If government was correct in its perception of local authorities’ stance on *uc*, taken in conjunction with its own stance on the issue, a considerable and growing difference between the two appears to be emerging,⁴ which would have considerable implications on the concept’s construction and its ability to hold together as a single idea.

However, here it should be noted that many of the *ucs* predated any type of guidance offered by government. Moreover, all the *ucs* reflected upon by government predated government’s requirement for such studies to be completed and were in fact voluntary endeavours to understand the concept better as it pertained to the authorities’ own perceived situations and circumstances. Therefore, these *ucs* needed to be considered in the light of the information that was available and the concerns of the time, and in terms of their own remits as to what they were trying to achieve⁵ (see chapters 7-8). Consequently, however restrained these authorities might have appeared to be in their initial thinking, these *ucs* did represent attempts by authorities to extend their thinking on the availability of land for housing and the possibility of additional amounts of housing being accommodated in urban areas, albeit in a rather restrictive way.

Furthermore, it was from the practice of these early *ucs* that the now-existing guidance had been derived. Therefore, the government’s thinking here took a backward look at previous practice derived from surveying previous *ucs*.⁶ Inevitably this is likely to date past practice, unless government thinking has not changed. This suggests that the gap found, based on government’s perception of local authorities’ stances and its own, may not be anything more than part of an ongoing iterative process between government and local authorities. From this perspective the good practice that government had perceived might be the first signs of a more general trend towards the new positioning, and with new guidance now coming into effect other authorities might be set to follow.⁷

⁴ This will be further explored through the survey of existing studies, which should bring findings up to date (2002), and through the case study material of South Tyneside’s thinking on the issue of *uc* compared to the model and the government’s current position.

⁵ A point made in *Housing and Urban Capacity* Annex A 1.12 (p.3).

⁶ I.e. The government comment on existing *ucs* is inevitably retrospective.

⁷ This will be further explored through the survey of existing studies, which should bring findings up to date (2002), and through the case study material of South Tyneside’s thinking on the issue of *uc* compared to the models and the government’s existing position.

4.4 The Government's Position Explored

4.4.1 Urban Capacity Linked to Housing

The first use of the term *uc* in government documentation⁸ linked the idea of *uc* to housing. More specifically it linked *uc* to issues of housing provision and supply, and most particularly to the ability of urban areas to accommodate this housing and how this could be assessed. This in itself was a reflection of an earlier linkage made by administering authorities in their attempts to discover their urban areas' ability to accommodate additional housing.⁹ Thus the early link between the two was established.

Nevertheless, although linked, the relationship between the idea of *uc* and housing remained dynamic with changes occurring and continuing to occur over time. The early linkage to housing was driven by the ongoing but recently fuelled concerns over the then-recent household projections (see chapter 2) and their forecasted 4.4 million additional homes,¹⁰ and the concern of where these homes could be accommodated, in towns or in the country. Government documents of this time, set within the housing debate, whilst exploring the possibility of accommodating more homes in urban areas, were cautious about how far this could or should go.¹¹ Moreover, early attempts at *ucs* by authorities¹² also linked the idea of *uc* to housing, with the emphasis on the limits of the capability of urban areas to accommodate such numbers of new homes. This suggests that the early linkage between housing and *uc* fitted more nearly to the Constrained Model and the underlying assumptions of existing capacity.

However, *Housing and Urban Capacity* began to challenge this view, suggesting that less orthodox thinking should be pursued which could effectively increase housing provision in urban areas by as much as 25%.¹³ This document demonstrated a critical shift in thinking, away from the view that urban areas have finite amounts of land available for additional housing -with a threshold beyond which it would be unsustainable to venture- towards an advocacy of new ways of thinking about housing standards, and policies, that effectively

⁸ *Housing and Urban Capacity* (1997), authored by UK Round Table on Sustainable Development (main body of the text) and Llewelyn-Davies (Annex).

⁹ West Sussex Study, London 1994 Study, Hertfordshire Study.

¹⁰ These forecasted figures were higher than previous projections but conformed to the then-existing trend, which also had a tendency to be an underestimate- (*Household Growth* figure A1 p.47), almost setting the unarticulated presumption that the reality was likely to be higher and posing the problem of where these additional households should be housed (*Household Growth*).

¹¹ *Our Future Homes* (p.46-48) and *Household Growth*.

¹² See also chapters 5-9, which reflect on the *ucs*.

¹³ *Our Future Homes* (p.47) set the target of previously used land at 50%. *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.11) suggests a more ambitious target of 75%.

increase the potential for additional housing in urban areas; the shift in emphasis from capacity (the Constrained Model) to potential (the Opportunity Model). Effectively this thinking (started in 1997 but continuing from that point on) began to privilege housing use over other uses. It did this firstly through advocating that sites should be considered primarily for housing and, secondly, by promoting the idea that previously designated sites should be reviewed with the possibility of changing other designations to housing. When compared against the research models this suggests a greater parity to the Opportunity Model and the premise of releasable potential. This flies in the face of the way *uc* was being considered and used prior to this date as a counter argument through evidence (the *ucs*) that further additional housing could not be accommodated within stated localities.

More recently, an elaboration of the previous term (*uc*) became established -*urban housing capacity*- usually in connection with, or as a title of, an *ucs*. This appears to make the linkage complete, with housing being submerged into this new shared term, and the term becoming more descriptive of what it was becoming – *uc* as it pertained to housing. Certainly the ideas that were previously held within the concept of *uc* were all reflected in this term and its usage. However, it could also be seen as an attempt by particular organisations¹⁴ to re-establish the distinction between capacity for all uses in urban areas and capacity specifically for housing in urban areas. This demonstrates explicitly a move away from the implicit privileging of housing use over other uses and a recognition of the need for other uses to be accommodated as part of urban use as well. It effectively encouraged this connection to be made within the concept of *uc* through the clear indication that this concept as it currently stood was sectorised and only a part -the housing part- of a wider whole. Depending on how it was used, *urban housing capacity* either embedded the notion of *urban capacity* into the argumentation of the Opportunity Model more firmly, making it more explicitly about housing and thereby privileging this use, or alternatively taking the idea back into the more Constrained Model argumentation by re-asserting that housing is only one use, and that the urban areas ability to accommodate additional development is finite and constrained.

4.4.2 The Countryside-Urban Regeneration Connection and its Link to UC

Once the need for further housing was established the issue became a discussion of ‘where’ rather than ‘whether’. The early examples of government thinking considered favourably the then-existing trend of housing requirement being met increasingly through urban

¹⁴ Some of whom adopted the term.

development and brownfield reuse but did little initially to develop this trend further.¹⁵ Moreover, some texts cast doubt, albeit somewhat muted, on the viability of urban areas to continue to accommodate additional housing.¹⁶ Such concerns for the ability of urban areas to accommodate additional housing on the grounds of sustainability suggest a proximity of many of the early texts to the Constrained Model, with a presumption of constraint rather than potential. However, the general acceptance of some *urban under-use* found even within these texts, might suggest that these texts are closer to accepting the notion of potential capacity, with its underlying assumptions and subsequent implications than to the idea of existing capacity.

In contrast to the slightly cautious concern over additional development in urban areas there was general and consistent agreement that the countryside should be protected from further development pressure. Concern over greenfield incursions and the increasing trend of urbanisation, as well as concern over the likely travel patterns (linked to increases in car use) that such trends are likely to induce were frequently articulated,¹⁷ and were consistently argued negatively as unsustainable. Therefore it can be seen that the argumentation between development in the city and development within the country has never been even-handed, with the protection of the countryside consistently privileged over similar concerns for the need to preserve urban areas.

This construction of disparity, linked to the acceptance of the need to provide for the required additional households, effectively forced a need for a change in thinking on housing development in urban areas. Thus the benefits of urban development began to be argued not only on grounds of sustainability: reducing greenfield land-take, re-using previously-developed sites, and reducing the need to travel (by car), sometimes linked to design and urban form issues; but also on grounds of urban regeneration, argued on the basis of quality - be it quality of life reflected by maintained or enhanced service and facility provision, and increased opportunity, or quality of environment with an emphasis

¹⁵ *Our Future Homes* (p.47) set the target of previously-developed land at 50%- only 1% off the then-existing amount of housing being provided on previously-developed sites.

¹⁶ *Planning for the Communities of the Future* (par. 5.27) suggested that 'building within existing urban areas may improve sustainability by increasing density but there may be a limit to the benefits of sustainability to be gained', and that a drive for re-use of urban land might have complex impact on the urban land market; whilst *Planning for Sustainable Development*: noted that developing urban areas can be sustainable, but that sustainable communities need more than just finding redundant urban development sites on which to build new dwellings (par. 2.3.5), and that 'urban areas are not just receptors for new housing and other forms of development pressure', (par. 2.1.5).

¹⁷ UTF, Bibby and Shepherd (1990), *Planning for Sustainable Development*.

on improved urban design quality. *Planning for Sustainable Development* offered a good example of this construction:

Development in urban areas will reduce the need to travel, revitalise and regenerate urban centres and help to reduce pressure for development on the countryside

Planning for Sustainable Development (1998), par. 2.1.1

Plans should maximise the amount of development (within existing urban areas) consistent with maintaining and enhancing the quality of the urban environment

Planning for Sustainable Development (1998), par 2.1.2

and UTF: *figure 2.5 Models of Urban Capacity* demonstrated how higher density development reduces land-take, increases centre identity and makes public transport viable.

This shift in emphasis began to move towards the Opportunity Model, although in *Planning for Sustainable Development*, despite its argumentation quoted above and the use of the word *potential* rather than *capacity*, other elements of its argument put it closer to the Constrained Model, underpinned by notions of potential capacity.

Nevertheless, the endorsement of urban housing development as regeneration or sustainability or urban environmental improvement, in this and other texts, was then reflected in the ways that issues of density, planning standards, and use designations were treated, and opened the possibility of other more systemic changes. This was reflected in the texts from 1997 onwards, after the suggestion was made in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.7-8) that less traditional thinking should be pursued, aided by texts like *The Use of Density* which challenged many of the widely held assumptions on density, and which highlighted the need to reconsider the idea of density altogether (see chapter 2). Just these changes would in reality have a major impact on urban form over time, re-configuring the city and thereby influencing (in the long term) social behaviour.¹⁸ However, they did not actively advocate attempts to change such behaviour or preferences, although *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.8) came close with a suggestion that planners were too conservative in their considerations of social preferences. However, both UTF and *Urban White Paper* went further, suggesting possible initiatives that could be pursued to encourage changes in people's perception and acceptance of urban areas as desirable places to live, and emphasising the need for this to happen. This suggests that these documents should be cited within the Opportunity Model increasing potential when set against the models of argumentation.

¹⁸ Most notably through the travel patterns it would produce.

This then clearly demonstrated a gradual but persistent move away from accepting, and in some cases even arguing, that urban areas might have finite capacity (the Constrained Model) albeit not fully explored or found (potential capacity),¹⁹ to that of arguing that social preferences needed to be changed to accommodate the now current planning view (according to government and required by *PPG3:2000*) that intensification of urban areas is good for both town and country alike (the Opportunity Model- increased potential).

4.4.3 Urban Under-use

However *uc* is argued, it rests on the issue of urban under-use. In the Constrained Model, whilst accepted as a possibility, urban under-use is taken as a premise that needed exploration, with the emphasis on the *ucs* proving one way or another whether space was available, and whether it could sustainably supply accommodation for further housing provision. It was on these grounds that further accommodation of housing in specific urban areas could be argued either way. Critically, it conceived space as being finite- the distinctive difference between capacity and potential.

In the Opportunity Model the presumption of under-use pre-exists and the *ucs* became a matter of exploring the possibilities of, in the first instance, finding and releasing it and, in the second instance, creating it. This alternative position did not accept the arguments being offered by earlier *ucs*²⁰ that space cannot be found and, therefore, it did not accept that housing could not be provided for. Instead it argued that through policy changes, systemic changes,²¹ and through changes in social attitudes towards, for example, urban living, car-free living, and the perception of cities as desirable places to inhabit, increased housing provision could be achieved (with no upper limit at its most extreme) in the urban areas.

In the early government texts the possibility that there might be a finite amount of space beyond which housing in urban areas becomes unsustainable and therefore undesirable could be seen, although the phrase *town-cramming* found in other texts, beyond those presented by government, was not visible. However, phrases like:

Building within existing urban areas may improve sustainability by increasing density, but there may be a limit to the benefits of sustainability to be gained

Household Growth (1996), par. 5.27

¹⁹ *Household Growth* (par. 5.27).

²⁰ See the criticisms in *Housing and Urban Capacity*, and *TiP*.

²¹ Notably to the planning system, but changes might also be fiscal changes, or housing management changes- they were not limited to planning ones.

did imply the notion that town-cramming was a reality, not a myth, and that it was also a genuine concern. This emphasis on finite amounts suggested that these early government texts were closer to the Constrained Model than to the Opportunity Model. This having been said, as well as not mentioning town-cramming as a particular problem, many of the texts also suggested that there should be some exploration of urban areas for under-use, and that housing development, in some instances anyway, could offer opportunities to revitalise areas. In addition to this, these texts suggested that *ucs* might adopt more exploratory methods in seeking out and finding the opportunities that already exist. This suggested that these texts tended to take a position closer to that of seeking out *potential capacity* (i.e. the position still within the Constrained Model but moving towards the Opportunity Model) than to that of *existing potential* (the position furthest from the Opportunity Model).

However, *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.7-8 and p.L-D 22-23) suggested a more radical position, challenging existing thinking on how *ucs* have been completed, suggesting that development-opportunities had been overlooked but, more importantly, criticising early *ucs* on their inability to be exploratory, their orthodox attitude and their acceptance of existing policies on density, layout, parking standards and land designations, with an advocacy that a much more proactive stance be taken, resting on a premise of urban under-use at the expense of exploring alternative policies. From this it can be seen that on the methodological issues of carrying out an *ucs*, this document in its consideration of urban under-use favoured the Opportunity Model: releasable potential, and set the tone for future documents in their thinking on *uc* and *ucs*.

Later documents, e.g. UTF and *Urban White Paper* began to argue the case against town-cramming, emphasising the current under-use and the potential problem of this under-use in contrast to the potential problem of over-intensification and town-cramming previously argued in some circles. Indeed UTF argues quite strongly for compact cities with higher densities and reduced parking provision linked to regeneration, design issues and a presumption of this urban form's sustainability that for many has not yet been fully proven (Breheny:1992b). This suggested that from 1997 the trend in thinking in government circles on the issue of under-use had shifted from a cautious expectation that there might be some under-use occurring to the clear assertion that this was and is the case, although there are still some cautionary notes observable in some texts up until 1999.²² Thus the purpose of *ucs* shifted, from exploring the existence of urban under-use to envisioning

²² PPG3:(Draft).

possible ways of bringing diverse development-opportunities and under-used land back into housing use, with a variety of impacts on the built form, the planning system and potential social preferences and behaviours, some of which have already come into effect. This then suggests that the government have settled on an understanding of *uc* more in keeping with the Opportunity Model, and that this has now been realised (at least partially) through changes in *PPG3* and *PPG11*, *PMM*, the management of land release, *NLUD*; and through changes in the availability of fiscal packages, largely through grants and tax relief, which may or may not have the desired effect.

4.4.4 UC and the Issue of Sustainability

Uc was linked to the issue of sustainability from its inception, first appearing in a government published text co-authored by the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development²³ in response to the government's Green Paper on household growth and the government's declared aim to ensure that:

as many homes as possible of the new homes we need will be built in existing urban areas

Our Future Homes: cited in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (1997), p.5

This organisation²⁴ was set up to consider 'major sustainable development issues' (*Housing and Urban Capacity* preface); and their rapid endorsement, through their use, of the term '*uc*', immediately gave the concept 'sustainability' credentials. However, within this document no evidence was given to support this position.²⁵ Instead it was assumed and largely accepted.

Nevertheless, *uc* had been argued to be sustainable elsewhere, although the grounds on which this claim was made had changed over time. In the early period of the government's thinking (1995-1997), and in documents emphasising sustainability,²⁶ not housing, there had been a more cautious construction of *uc* as the sustainable answer. In these documents some emphasis had been placed on the idea that there comes a point at which further or future development is no longer sustainable.²⁷ This was usually argued on social and economic grounds, rather than on environmental ones. It was also argued on the complexity of the issues, and the difficulty of determining the total impact of changes in policy to ascertain just how sustainable or otherwise such changes might be, as well as a

²³ *Housing and Urban Capacity* (1997).

²⁴ The UK Round Table on Sustainable Development.

²⁵ The obvious *sustainable* element of *uc* would be the issue of land-take, and the renewal/re-use of previously-developed-land, however this is not greatly elaborated on.

²⁶ *Planning for Sustainable Development*.

²⁷ *Household Growth* par. 5.27.

caution against a presumption of development over a presumption of care. This suggests an understanding of the issues close to that found in the Constrained Model.

In contrast, more recent thinking had challenged the view that there was no space in towns and cities (see section 4.4.3 above), and has argued for more progressive thinking. This position was started in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.7), and then taken up as the way forward by other texts. Such an emphasis argued the issue of sustainability on the grounds of protecting the countryside and reducing greenfield land-take on the one hand, and on the development of more sustainable travel patterns, notably reducing the need for car-use, induced by more compact urban forms²⁸ on the other. Additionally the case was argued in terms of urban regeneration, which was also seen to be a more sustainable outcome than under-used land that potentially exacerbates decline.

When reviewing *ucs*, *Housing and Urban Capacity* noted its dislike for how sustainable arguments linked to *uc* were being formulated at the time, noting that some *ucs*:

were carried out for a variety of reasons not necessarily related to the kinds of sustainability of objectives which the Round Table would like to see explored

Housing and Urban Capacity (1997), par. 4.7 p.L-D 17

Housing and Urban Capacity's par 4.10 indicated that *uc* was being used to argue for less, not more development with no substantiation from a methodological study of capacity. This suggests a refute against claims of sustainability on the grounds of town-cramming and/or over-intensification and the establishment that sustainable and sustainability effectively meant more (i.e. more urban housing).

Thus *Housing and Urban Capacity* noted the difference between local authorities' practice and reluctant attitude, and its own aspiration for a different approach. It suggested (p.L-D 16) a move away from *quantification*, which often calculated development through projecting past trends (effectively reiterating the pre-existing practices of local planning practitioners, i.e. the Constrained Model), towards *exploration*, which began to reflect on past practices and sometimes suggested changes (i.e. the Constrained Model-the Opportunity Model). Indeed, *Housing and Urban Capacity* went further to suggest that practitioners need some *illumination*. This *illumination* was aimed at challenging practitioners' and the public's views on issues of density, car-parking standards, city-living and the ability to deliver liveable places through designs at higher densities (i.e. the Opportunity Model).

²⁸ The debate on the sustainability or otherwise of compact urban forms is reviewed more fully in chapter 2.

However, there was an interesting anomaly in the advice given on the carrying out of *ucs*. The texts consistently argued against the way *ucs* have been carried out in the past (except where they were presenting best practice examples), and consistently argued the case for conceptualising *uc* in the mode of the Opportunity Model, with a presumption for potential not capacity. However, *Housing and Urban Capacity* (the first survey) suggested (p.L-D 22) that *ucs* could be used as part of the environmental appraisal requirement, then part of *PPG12*, effectively emphasising constraint. This suggests potentially wider constraint criteria, or at least other constraint criteria, that could be applied. Such criteria would be likely to have the effect of reducing, not increasing the identified capacity, effectively suggesting a proximity to the Constrained Model amidst general advice more closely affiliated to the Opportunity Model.

In the urban potential study method suggested in *Planning for Sustainable Development* the implication appears to be reversed. Here the sustainable principles implicitly challenge thinking on existing land uses by suggesting that they be scrutinised against the sustainable principles, with the possibility that they could be changed. This suggests a position closer to that found in the Opportunity Model amidst an argument that was elsewhere tempered with concern for the sustainability of developing urban areas: the Constrained Model.

The final better practice guidance, *TtP* (p.31), in contrast, had dropped any kind of environmental discounting from consideration, suggesting that even conservation areas (probably the urban areas closest to being treated in the same way as countryside areas) should at least be explored for possibilities in the first instance. It made no suggestion of any sustainable principles or environmental appraisal being tested at all. Indeed the document argued that *uc* was already over-discounted and that the market found more than the *ucs* did, advocating if anything a relaxation in the way discounting was applied. This suggests that urban housing was now perceived to be sustainable in its own right and should not be reduced by discounting on such grounds. This largely rested on the presumption that urban areas are under-used and that the sustainable, and therefore desirable, option was to develop within them, clearly an Opportunity Model position.

Once more it can be seen that government had moved from a position close to the Constrained Model to a position more reflecting the Opportunity Model, with an additional emphasis on accepting *uc* and urban housing development as being sustainable almost by definition, rather than by examination- set against some test or principles or criteria deemed sustainable.

4.5 The Points of Contention to be Found Within the Government Position

There were a number of points of contention that had to be traversed in the shift of government thinking away from the Constrained Model and towards the Opportunity Model. Usually government was talking to a wider audience than itself. This was not necessarily the same audience, but across the divergent audiences there was plenty of overlap. Therefore some of their rebuttals and position were in the light of this wider debate, and were responding to critics whose voices were not presented, although often they were reflected in the other positions explored.

4.5.1 The Housing Requirement Contentions

As already seen, *uc* was linked to housing provision and the perceived need that additional housing had to be found. This debate was greatly fuelled by the then current household projections of 1995,²⁹ which anticipated a possible additional demand of 4.4 million households over the period needing to be housed. This fitted with the then-existing trend of ever increasing additional numbers of households, and past experience demonstrated that the projected figures had consistently been under-estimates (points made in *Household Growth* and endorsed by *Planning for the Communities of the Future*). Implicitly this suggested that the position could be more extreme than the figures showed, and raised issues of whether, how, and where these projected households should be housed.

This interaction took the form of a debate rather than a discussion amongst the housing community and some of these objections subsequently emerge in the government texts.³⁰ These objections centred, firstly, on the household projections themselves. Government noted these responses in *Planning for the Communities of the Future* (par. 16), but indicated that most did not directly challenge the methodology by which these projections had been reached, concluding in par. 17 that the methodology was robust, and drew on the 1995 *Select Committee Inquiry into Housing Need* and other inquiry findings as evidence to that effect, as well as noting that the projection methods were similar to those found in other countries.

²⁹ *Household Projections to 2016*.

³⁰ *Household Growth* noted in the first chapter heading that the projections were ‘an issue for us all’, spent 2 chapters and at least one annex on the projections themselves, before going on to look at the possible solutions from chapter 4. *Planning for the Communities of the Future* considered household growth, other organisations’ responses to them, and the economics of household growth and housing supply (par. 6-23), all set in the wider context of creating sustainable environments and sustainable communities (par. 1).

The projections and the way they were generated were further endorsed by *Government Response to Housing Report* (1998) par. 2 and par. 14, thus establishing the validity of the methodology by which these figures were derived. However, the government did note that there was some concern over what was known about household growth and how it was driven; although it also noted that few suggestions were made about how it could be slowed, despite the fact that research was commissioned (par 18-23).

The government also noted a criticism of the projections' usage (*Planning for the Communities of the Future* par. 16), when considered as part of the then-current system of converting household projections into housing requirement and the need for individual regions and authorities to provide for this requirement. This was thought to be too top-down and it was thought that more account should be given to planning policies rather than to observable trends. These criticisms were met with a suggested alternative system (par. 24-34), thought by government to be more bottom-up in its approach, in which the projections would be guidance rather than prescription, although authorities would have to defend departures publicly. This suggests an acceptance of the criticism and the beginnings of a systemic change in which the housing projections play a smaller (but still significant) part in the process. This could potentially be seen as a way of reducing the pressure of provision underpinning the perceived need for assessing *uc*. This change possibly supports the position of the Constrained Model. Conversely, its emphasis on systemic changes, albeit of rather a different type, is generally more in keeping with the thinking of the Opportunity Model, and perhaps begins to strengthen the sense of the whole system of housing provision needing to be explored more fully, with a view to making changes definitely reflected in the Opportunity Model.

Additionally, the household projections and their usage were challenged in terms of their easy acceptance of the need to provide adequately for them. *Planning for the Communities of the Future* par. 16 noted the suggestion by some that non-provision of housing would stymie future household formation, effectively reducing the numbers of additional households being produced. Others argued that the projections were self-fulfilling, with the provision of housing generating the social aspiration for additional housing, effectively creating further demand (Bramley and Watkins:1995). However, *Household Growth* refuted this claim, asserting that there was limited evidence that the availability of housing led people to set up households, and that social and demographic factors appeared to be stronger influences. Par. 20 of *Planning for the Communities of the Future* cited research, also done by Bramley as one of a wider team, this time for DETR (Bramley et al:2000), as

bearing out the finding that demographic and social influences are stronger and that economic influences also have an effect. Nevertheless, this research did find a single study that suggested the reduction of the provision of housing in development plans might reduce household growth by 10%, but would have a greater impact on migration patterns caused by the resulting increase of house prices as they became a scarcer commodity.

Moreover, par. 20 of *Planning for the Communities of the Future* suggested that research also showed that households would continue to form, but would buy less space (as prices rose). Holmans was cited in *Household Growth*, suggesting that holding down numbers of dwellings would have no significant effect on household formation but would lead to less satisfactory housing conditions through enforcing shared accommodation, and through increasing the amount of income spent on housing through increased rents and prices. Here he postulated that those least able to afford it would be most likely to feel the impact. *Household Growth* also challenged Bramley's early finding for CPRE (Bramley and Watkins:1995 and Bramley:1996), stating that whilst there was an association between housing provision and household formation/in-migration at a local level this did not prove the one causing the other. *Planning for the Communities of the Future* drew this discussion together by suggesting that restricting housing provision would have a number of effects: higher prices, more enforced sharing, greater demands for social housing, and possibly greater homelessness. These might be offset by some reduction in household growth, and concluded that:

in pursuing our planning policies therefore we need to avoid unduly restricting supply and thus increasing the pressure on the ability of both the social housing and market housing sectors to maintain the supply of affordable housing

Planning for the Communities of the Future (1998), par. 22

This effectively endorsed the position of accommodating the future households through providing adequately for the requirement. This was further endorsed by the strengthening of government's position through such statements as:

(the government's) objective is not to seek to avoid the pressures which the formation of new households will exert, but to provide sustainable solutions which will help ensure that the housing we provide now will, by its nature and location, enhance the quality of the environment.

Government Response to Housing Report (1998), par. 3

This set in place the need for *uc* (more in the mode of the Opportunity Model) to be explored as an option to accommodate this additional requirement.

4.5.2 *The Ability of Urban Areas to Accommodate Additional Housing- The Case for Urban Under-use*

The argumentation and establishment of urban under-use as a fact rather than a possibility formed a critical element of government thinking on *uc* and underpinned their shift from the position of the Constrained Model to that of the Opportunity Model. In many instances this urban under-use was stated negatively, concentrating on the under-use.³¹ In other instances this under-use was stated more positively,³² and in some the under-use was identified.³³ Where this under-use or potential was not stated it was frequently implied, with attention drawn to urban wastage in some instances³⁴ (under-use), and to the possibility of maximising use in others³⁵ (potential).

This assumption has been established through repetition.³⁶ Moreover, these phrases repeatedly established the policy link the government was making between urban under-use and the government's intent to use this spare space for housing;³⁷ a policy thought to be widely supported.³⁸ Urban under-use had also been established through the use of statistics,³⁹ through the use of argumentation⁴⁰ within the texts and, occasionally, through challenges on how the debate had been conducted.⁴¹ These statistics and arguments were sometimes readily available in ongoing research and data collection report,⁴² but at other times the discussion itself seemed to have generated inquiries and research to provide the

³¹ PPG3:(Draft) (par. 36), (and of buildings par. 40), PPG3:2000 (par. 24); redrafting of par. 36, with the essence being *urban under-use*. *Housing and Urban Capacity* (par. 11).

³² *Reducing the Need to Travel* - key point (p.65).

³³ *Urban White Paper* included under-used space over shops p.56, and empty homes p.57, PPG3:(Draft) noted the under-use of buildings (par. 40).

³⁴ The wastage of under-used urban infrastructure (schools, shops even houses) p.2 of *Government Response to the Proposed Urban White Paper* (par. 4.20), and *TiP* noted that over-allocation (for employment use) was a wasted resource (p.15).

³⁵ *Planning for the Communities of the Future* (par.12), *Household Growth* (par. 7.3).

³⁶ 'Maximising the reuse of previously-developed land' appeared in *Planning for the Communities of the Future* (par. 12), PPG11:(Draft) (par. 5.5), PPG3:(Draft) (par. 20), PPG3:2000 (par. 21), *Conversions and Development* (par. 1.11).

³⁷ PPG3:2000 (par. 21-22).

³⁸ In *Planning for the Communities of the Future* (par. 35).

³⁹ *Household Growth* (par. 5.3), UTF (p.60), *Urban White Paper* (all of chapter 2 but particularly par. 2.6-2.8 and par. 4.13- 4.15), *Reducing the Need to Travel* (par. 5.05, par. 5.19), *Housing and Urban Capacity* (par. 5 p.6) quoting *Bibby and Shepherd* (1996) par. 11.

⁴⁰ *Urban White Paper* (all of chapter 2 but particularly par. 2.10 and par. 4.13- 4.15), UTF (p.60).

⁴¹ *The Use of Density* (par. 9.33) noted the emotive and polarised nature of the debate, and aspired to contribute to the 'technical basis on which the [urban capacity] debate should be held' (par. 9.35).

⁴² *Bibby and Shepherd* (1996).

data and arguments necessary for a considered debate.⁴³ This then added credence to the level of debate surrounding this premise, effectively undermining others' alternative claims. However, once urban under-use had been established as a credible notion through such research, the argumentation took on a pattern of repetitive phraseology and the research became silent (though of course still available). This suggests that *uc* as argued in the Opportunity Model has become the way that *uc* is understood, with an underlying emphasis on potential over- capacity at least at a releasable stage, if not yet at an increasing potential stage.

This said, this belief has had to be so argued because it effectively challenged a previous practice premise of potential town-cramming.⁴⁴ A more soft-spoken cautionary note could be heard underneath the main theme, particularly in the earlier period, but even as late as 1999.⁴⁵ This more cautionary note emphasised the potential costs of developing urban areas further. These were predominantly seen to be economic⁴⁶ and social,⁴⁷ but also concentrated on questions of how sustainable such a practice would continue to be:

Building within existing urban areas may improve sustainability by increasing density, but there may be a limit to the benefits of sustainability to be gained.

Household Growth (1996), par. 5.27

This former position clearly is more in line with the thinking of the Constrained Model, with its emphasis on the finite capacity of the urban area to accommodate additional housing, and its argument against over-accommodating on the grounds of sustainability.

⁴³ Par. 5.31 of *Household Growth*: noted the growing debate about increased densities on sustainability and quality grounds – indicated a belief in ‘the lack of understanding’ about densities and the commissioning of research (un-named). *Use of Density* appeared to be the (or at least part of the) research response, and demonstrated how density could be used to achieve a variety of planning policies and potentially help (in certain circumstances) to encourage development to take place. It also endorsed the government’s position by challenging existing practice.

⁴⁴ *Ucs* concerns over town-cramming (see chapter 7): e.g. West Sussex Study (p.1), but noted in *TtP* (p.32) and *Housing and Urban Capacity* (par.12 p.7). Both these documents contain *ucs* surveys (see chapter 5 for comment on these), on which they based their claims about local authority perceptions); *PPG3:(Draft)* par.36 appeared accepting of the notion of town-cramming (phraseology dropped in final revision), *UTF* argued against urban-cramming (p.60).

⁴⁵ *PPG3:(Draft)*.

⁴⁶ *Household Growth* (par. 6.6-6.8) and *Communities of the Future* (par. 51) noted concern over the impact that such maximising of urban land would have on the urban land market - although this latter concern never developed into a fuller debate.

⁴⁷ *Household Growth* (par. 6.6-6.8), *Planning for Sustainable Development* (par. 2.3.5).

However, government has effectively assaulted any prior claims of town-cramming through declarations of comparison,⁴⁸ rebuttals of conflicting claims,⁴⁹ the undermining of contrary evidence⁵⁰ and challenges on previous thinking and the ways this thinking had been maintained,⁵¹ offering little credence to the notion that the previous premise of town-cramming could be justified, and attacking practices⁵² and authorities⁵³ that continue to find the new dogma difficult to accommodate. Therefore it is possible to see, through this change of emphasis and challenge on pre-existing practice and premise, a dramatic shift away from thinking of *uc* in the terms of the Constrained Model towards those found in the Opportunity Model.

4.5.3 The Argumentation of Sustainability

As already stated, both models included a perception of *uc* as sustainable. Indeed it could be argued that the reason why *uc* had been pursued as an idea, and assessed -in whatever terms that it had been- at all, was because of its sustainability credentials. Furthermore both models link the idea of sustainability to the idea of development (with particular reference to housing). However, the concept of sustainability contained in both models demonstrated a different emphasis through a shift in focus and argumentation.

These shifts occurs within single texts, indicating the amorphous nature of the ideas involved, and across texts so that early understandings of *uc* as sustainable tended to draw on the appraisal element of sustainability against 'objective criteria or principles.' This focuses on the Constrained Model's sustainability emphasis, which centred on the notion of finite capacity, and emphasised the idea that urban areas have development limits beyond which the urban environment becomes environmentally unacceptable, and urban living becomes an increasingly negative experience.

Later texts tended to reference a more strategic sustainable policy emphasis, concentrating on urban areas as the main delivery policy to ensure more sustainable patterns of development in terms of hoped for building patterns, travel patterns and societal change.

⁴⁸ *TiP* (p.32 and p.34), and in his research of the same name (*Urbed:1999*), on which this guidance is based, Rudlin noted that in actuality the market found more capacity in areas than the *ucs* estimated there would be, indicating greater under-use in reality than the authorities perceived.

⁴⁹ *UTF* (1999) (p.60) 'the problem with parts of English towns and cities...is that densities are just too low (refuting claims of 'urban cramming').

⁵⁰ Often through challenging the methodology by which it has been reached e.g. *TiP* (p. 17) 'few studies to date have measured directly all capacity within an area.'

⁵¹ *Housing and Urban Capacity* (1997) (par. 4.16, par. 4.17), cited in full earlier in this research.

⁵² *Urban White Paper* (par. 4.13-4.21).

⁵³ *Government Response to the Proposed Urban White Paper* (p.3).

Thus much of the difference in argumentation can be put down to different emphases of concern.

Firstly, the confusion within the texts could be seen, particularly in *Household Growth*, which spent some effort in establishing the social, environmental and economic impacts of different land-use development strategies aimed at increasing housing provision (in terms of accommodation, not delivery). This effectively set a principle whereby central government could assess the likely impact to ensue from various policy options at a national level, and could indicate through these the sustainability of each option (at a strategic policy level). However, elsewhere in the document, it refuted the link being made in other *ucs* (e.g. West Sussex Study p.6) between environmental capacity and *uc*, and its subsequent use as an argument for non-development on the grounds of environmental capacity having been reached. In par. 4.28 the government claimed that ‘environmental capacity’ was a concept borrowed from the environmental sciences, where things can be relatively easily quantified in terms of individual eco-systems, but that it became less certain at the point of planning for development, where less easily quantifiable pressures were at work. They suggested that the term ‘environmental capacity’ should not be used as a euphemism for straightforward resistance to development (see also this research’s chapter 2), nor should ‘sustainable development’; and government also suggested that in some instances *ucs* were used in this way as well.

Secondly, *Housing and Urban Capacity* noted the use of the construction of *uc* and the use of the *ucs* as a test to determine the sustainability or otherwise of existing (housing) policy, and as evidence of this sustainability at the point of an EIP. However, it challenged the way in practice this use had been carried out, and that many authorities had a different view of sustainability from that of this document’s authors.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, as already mentioned, this document also suggested that the *ucs* could usefully be used as a part of the environmental appraisal process then outlined in *PPG12*, suggesting, against all other evidence within the document, that the authors did see *ucs* as being, at least in part, about environmental (or sustainable) appraisal.

Planning for Sustainable Development also seemed to argue a mixed case, with some emphasis on the need not to presume that urban areas and certain sites can accommodate additional housing- argued on the grounds of sustainability:

⁵⁴ The UK Round Table for Sustainable Development and Llewelyn-Davies (Annex).

Building sustainable communities involves more than just the finding redundant urban sites on which to build new dwellings.

Planning for Sustainable Development (1998), par.2.3.5

Existing urban areas are not just the receptors for new housing and other forms of development pressure.

Planning for Sustainable Development (1998), par.2.1.5

It suggested that policies (within *ucs*) be tested against sustainable principles, whilst at other points registering the possibility that development in existing urban areas would help to create more sustainable patterns of development, regenerate urban centres, and protect the countryside.

In all three instances the division appears at the point of focus. Where the texts reflected on specifics, such as site assessment, the sustainability emphasis is on development impact, but where the text reflected on principle or strategic policy options, the emphasis was on policy. That these did not marry up very well is part of the ongoing tension found within the concept of *uc*.

To overcome this tension, later documents discussed more vigorously the arguments, firstly, of regeneration and improved urban design,⁵⁵ and secondly, of regeneration and improved functionality.⁵⁶ Thirdly, they argued for site-specific design-led approaches, to show the possibilities against the claims of cramming,⁵⁷ and also to meet the overall target of 60% of all new housing development on previously-developed-land and buildings and through empty homes strategies. Finally, these documents also argued against study practice and methodology with challenges on previous *ucs*,⁵⁸ because the *ucs* discovered less capacity than the market found, looked in the wrong areas, at the wrong types, carried out incomplete searches, and gave insufficient attention to other policies and designations that might be changed.

Against this plethora of criticisms it was hard to sustain the fundamental principle, held in the Constrained Model, that there might truly be a case for viewing capacity in terms of a constricted, rather than an expanding, resource on the basis of sustainability linked to the ideas of environmental capacity. Moreover, it was easy to lose sight of the original purposes of *ucs* (purposes that had been developed by authorities through their perceptions

⁵⁵ *UTF* (1999), *Urban White Paper* (2000).

⁵⁶ *UTF* (1999).

⁵⁷ *TiP* design and urban compaction- *UTF* (1999).

⁵⁸ All these challenges can be found in *TiP*.

of what was needing to be explored). It was also easy to lose sight of the questions that arose from reflecting on the loss of the concept of sustainability found in the concept of the Constrained Model and its possible uncomfortable implications, given that the new better practice guide gave little space for sustainability to be tested, and possibly cramped styles, in the light of its drive to discover potential.

4.6 The Repercussions of This Shift in Thinking

This shift in thinking had a number of repercussions, both for planning as a whole and for *ucs* and their methods. In terms of planning as a whole, within these texts there has been a call for changes in thinking and practice, and a call for systemic changes to assist in the perhaps difficult delivery of these changes. Government has seen (local authority) planners as reluctant in adopting alternative policies and in challenging orthodox thinking.⁵⁹ This is reflected in the various challenges to planning content outlined above. However, they have also been critical of what planners have produced in terms of built form, and how this has come about,⁶⁰ and have emphasised the need for improving the skills of planners and developers (notably in design, but also perhaps in managing CPOs, Masterplanning etc.). Thus they argued the need for new planning processes, and new planning skills (or perhaps old skills revisited) and expertise, with an emphasis on new thinking (a new orthodoxy), new ways of delivery (new practice and process), and new outcomes.

To this end a number of changes have already been made (discussed in chapter 2) with the introduction of a new *PPG3:2000* in particular and *PPG11:2000* in support (in terms of housing), offering a guidance overview, new processes for planning for housing (Plan, Monitor, Manage (PMM) rather than Predict and Provide), and a sequential approach to land release. New requirements for authorities to facilitate these new processes, including the need to complete *ucs* and needs assessment studies, as well as the need to collect data for the National Land Use Database (NLUD), have also been instigated. These guidance documents have been further bolstered with better practice guidance on the delivery of new and possibly problematic elements found within *PPG3:2000*, including guides on *ucs* (*TtP*), design (*By Design*), monitoring and managing the release of sites (*Monitoring the Provision of Housing* and *The Managed Release of Housing Sites(Draft)*).

⁵⁹ *Housing and Urban Capacity*.

⁶⁰ *Urban White Paper*.

In addition to these changes, a more proactive approach to utilising urban space is being advocated, through suggested changes in fiscal measures as incentives for development, e.g. LOTS funding through 100% capital allowance, and through a reassessment of existing planning powers, e.g. CPOs are being encouraged again for land assembly; and a new approach to design is being advocated overall. At the policy level there have been suggestions that density standards be reviewed with new minimum densities, where previously maximum densities were used, and that parking standards and road layouts should also be reviewed. Whilst it would be possible to argue that one or two of these changes might not be significant, taken together they constitute such a change in thinking and approach to housing provision and the use of urban land that to suggest there has actually been a systemic shift to facilitate the use of urban areas for housing provision would not be overstating the case.

At the heart of this process, according to *TiP* (p.5), lies the *ucs*- the study designed to assess the amount of potential for housing to be found within the urban area. This study has become a requirement rather than a voluntary endeavour. It has also moved from the periphery to a more central position by drawing on the new NLUD, and the data sets produced by the new monitoring requirements and by feeding into policy through locating possible sites of development, part of PMM, and by advocating likely timings on sites being developed (sequential approach or managed release of sites), as well as continuing in its old function of supporting local authority housing policy at public inquiry.

This shift in thinking has been reflected in the government's expectations of what should be looked at within an *ucs*. *Uc*, as far as the government is concerned, has become a consideration of potential (the Opportunity Model), rather than constraint (the Constraint Model). The expectation that local authorities should view it in the same way has become established; with considerable emphasis being placed on authorities needing to explore (more) widely- other development opportunities; (more) deeply- experimenting with design scenarios, standards and designation, and perhaps regeneration initiatives; and with a (more) comprehensive area coverage- reflected in their search process.

Simultaneously, government advice has played down the issues of would-be constraints (discounting), cautioned about the adoption of preconceived assumptions and their previous over-emphasis, and suggested considerations of how constraints in reality could be minimised where they occur- through policy changes, fiscal assistance, etc.

If the government perception of the authorities' position in 2000 was correct, such changes would suggest quite a shift on the part of local authorities in their underlying

thinking on *uc*, on the methodological process they choose to adopt when carrying out *ucs*, and on the way they applied their findings to policy considerations. This will be reflected upon more fully in the latter parts of this research.

Uc is currently perceived by government to be more like the Opportunity Model with an emphasis on releasable potential. The idea that there is no room for additional housing (town-cramming) has become muted, and the perception of the *ucs* as the means to investigate the amount of land available for additional housing, and to validate policy according to these findings has shifted to an investigation into policy that will release previously unreleasable sites, linked to site discovery and sequencing land availability. Thus the concept of *uc*, according to government, has moved on, perhaps leaving behind the question of what happens to the idea of finite capacity and a threshold beyond which it would not be sustainable to go, as well as raising the issue for local authorities of how they were going to 'sell' these newly releasable sites and building spaces (such as LOTS) to a perhaps equally cautious set of developers and the people who would eventually live in them- i.e. the public.

Chapter 5 The *UCS* Survey: The Research Methods

Chapter 5 The UCS Survey: The Research Methods

5.1 An Outline of this Section's Questions and Analysis

This research's question centred on: what is meant by *uc*, how its meaning has evolved, and to what effect? Chapters 5-8 build on chapter 4's findings by developing a way to explore the other expressions of *uc* (introduced in chapter 3), i.e. the *uc* methods of assessment (described in chapters 5-6 and analysed in chapter 7), and the *uc* assessment-content (described and analysed in chapter 8) using the *uc* models constructed from chapter 4's government argumentation analysis. Given this need for *uc* to be assessed, another important determinant of the meaning of *uc* has been how this assessment has occurred.¹ Therefore, this research looked at *ucs* as the window into how *uc* was, and is, being assessed; whether this has changed, and if it has, how. The research also considered the implications of these changes where they existed,² on the meaning of *uc*, on the concept's evolution, and on the impact this has on the realm of planning practice and the realm of ideas.

From the main research interest a subset of questions emerged relating specifically to the *ucs* methods, and in finding answers to these questions the main research questions would also be partially answered. This subset of questions were:

1. Have the *ucs* methods changed and is this significant?
2. Do the *ucs* methods more closely reflect the concept of *uc* as it is described by this research's Constrained Model or Opportunity Model?
3. Does the government have preferred *ucs* methods, and if so what are they?
4. If present, do the government's *ucs* assessment method preferences (question 3) correlate to the *ucs* methods more closely related to this research's Constrained or Opportunity Model (assuming this can be verified) (question 2), and if so does this correlation relate to the government's argumentation shift observed in chapter 4?
5. Do any changes in the choices of assessment methods made in the *ucs* survey set reflect a systematic or a more incidental shift in thinking?
6. If systematic, do these changes reflect the government's *ucs* assessment method preferences (if present) or changes in the way *uc* has been argued, (chapter 4) or both?

¹ Discussed more fully in chapter 3.

² Or equally, what no change in methods would imply should this prove to be the case.

The next part of this chapter describes the research methods used to analyse the *ucs* methods to answer these questions, including this research's own survey methods. It also discusses the necessity of these particular research methods, and their limitations.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of this section of the research; it sets this research in the wider context of other *ucs* research and other surveys of *ucs*, and it describes the research methods used to analyse the *ucs* methods.

Chapter 6 provides descriptions of how the component parts of an *ucs* work together; introduces and explains the relevant terminology and describes the components themselves.³ It also presents the government's critique of the stage methods on offer⁴ and reflects on whether this demonstrates a government preference for particular stage methods. Finally it considers how the *ucs* surveyed by this research relate to this research's identified stage method-types (fully described below), i.e. whether the surveyed *ucs* methods fitted these method-types or not.

Chapter 7 analyses the individual *ucs* stage methods against this research's argued conceptual constructions (i.e. the Constrained Model and the Opportunity Model) to explore the stage method's particular conceptual bias reflected in its premises and techniques (see below), and supported by *ucs* evidence taken from the *ucs* survey. It also analyses the impact of bias on the aggregated *ucs* methods, again supporting its findings through the *ucs* survey findings. The chapter concludes by reflecting on these findings in relation to the questions posed above, and in relation to the previous findings in chapter 6, in response to this research's main concern centring on the meaning of the concept of *uc*, its evolution, and the implications of these on practice.

Chapter 8 analyses the content of the *ucs* by reflecting on the scope of the studies⁵ - their purpose,⁶ their coverage,⁷ their breadth⁸ and their depth.⁹ The chapter concludes by reflecting on these findings in relation to the questions posed above.

³ The stages, the concept of unconstrained capacity, and the stage methods.

⁴ Primarily taken from *TiP*

⁵ All the research terminology used here is described in section 5.7, is further elaborated on, if necessary, in chapter 8.

⁶ Whether it be partial or comprehensive, advice or a completed study.

⁷ What area is looked at.

⁸ What development-opportunities are considered.

⁹ What policy and constraint considerations are taken into account and to what level of detail.

5.2 The Survey of UCS

As a key feature of the *uc* concept has been its assessment, this expression of *uc*- both through assessment methods, and assessed content- needed to be reflected in this research. Therefore, *ucs* (the assessment tool for *uc*) were surveyed and their assessment methods and assessment-content were analysed to see what had been included. There have been previous surveys.

5.2.1 Other Surveys of UCS

The UK Round Table on Sustainable Development commissioned Llewelyn-Davies in 1997 to complete a survey of local authority practice, which resulted in the appendix of *Housing and Urban Capacity*. This identified about eight studies (see *Figure 5.1*), and observed whether local authorities were considering *uc* and how they were doing it, including reflections on the *ucs* methods and *ucs* assessment-content these authorities included and used.

Subsequently (1998-9) the DETR commissioned Urbed¹⁰ to complete a survey of local authority practice and 15 *ucs* (see *Figure 5.1*) to feed into their *TtP* advice. It focused on determining *ucs* 'good practice', concentrating on the *ucs* methods and assessment-content, from which government advice could be provided to local authorities as they completed the task of *uc* assessment for their localities.

As a small part of a wide-ranging report, Entec/De Montfort University also surveyed about 15 *ucs* in 1998 as part of their work for East Midlands (p.26) (see *Figure 5.1*), out of which they devised an *ucs* 'Method Framework' and advice to assist the East Midlands local authorities' completion of an *ucs*.

More recently (2002) work at Nottingham University assessing the viability of urban housing development includes a survey of 15 *ucs* to:

evaluate the possibility of applying the methodology (being developed) to the physical estimates in these studies.

ESRC award abstract (10-03-2002)¹¹

¹⁰ The work was headed up by Rudlin, and it is he who helped the DETR formulate the *TtP* advice in 2000, and who talked about the *uc* element of *PPG3:2000* at a number of launch conferences during 2000.

¹¹ Bid by Oxley and Golland (2002) *Assessing the Viability of Urban Housing Development* ESRC research number R000223799, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University.

Figure 5.1 The studies looked at in previous surveys of ucs

Study-*	Llewelyn-Davies (1997)	Entec & De Montfort University (1998)	Urbed (2000)	This Research (2000-2002)
Avon				✓
Cambridge		?		✓
Cambridge (South)		✓?		
Cambridgeshire		✓		
Cheltenham	✓	✓		
Chester	✓	✓	✓	
East Midlands Region			✓	✓
Gedling		✓		
Halton		✓		✓
Hampshire		✓		
Hart				✓
Hertfordshire	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kent			✓	
Leicestershire/Leicester		✓		✓
London SRQ†		?	✓	✓
London (1987)		?		
London (1994)	✓	?		✓
London (2000)		?	✓	✓
London: Larger sites			✓	
London LOTS			✓	
North East Nathaniel Litchfield				✓
North East Region (1998)			✓	✓
North Flintshire	✓			
North West Region			✓	✓
Northamptonshire		✓		
Nottingham	✓			
Sheffield				✓
South Hams				✓
South Tyneside (Brownfield)				✓
South West Region			✓	✓
Stoke				✓
Stroud			✓	
Suffolk		✓ (?)		
Surrey			✓	
West Sussex	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winchester	✓			
Wolverhampton				✓
Wychavon				✓
Yorkshire and Humber Region		✓	✓	✓
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDIES	8	15	15	22

*These studies have been identified by the way they have been identified in other surveys- not by how they have been identified in this survey.

Key:

? Unclear whether Entec's study was the same study as this research's as Entec's referencing does not provide the full ucs title: this is particularly true of the London, Cambridge and Suffolk studies. However Entec and De Monfort University list 15 studies in total.

† Llewelyn-Davies *London Sustainable Residential Quality Study* (1998)- In this research identified as London SRQ Study.

5.2.2 *This Research's Survey of UCS*

These surveys have tended to emphasise the method of *ucs*, particularly the 'how to' element of them. However, this research's interest was in what the assessment method and the assessment-content might express in terms of the conceptual construction of *uc*. For the purposes of analysis, this necessarily included outlining the different *ucs* methods and *ucs* assessed content, but goes further, to reflect on how the methods' techniques and the assessed content are likely to define *uc*, often in quite subtle ways, through the information that these *ucs* gather, and through the method used to gather, express and manipulate this information.

Most surveys of *ucs* have investigated about 15 *ucs*, therefore initially this research included 15 *ucs*. However, due to legislative changes in 2000, there were systemic changes in planning for housing, which required the completion of *ucs* by local authorities,¹² and since then considerable local and regional activity occurred as authorities complied to varying degrees with this new requirement.

Initially these legislative changes resulted in a lull in 2000,¹³ subsequently followed by explosive activity, as authorities complied with these requirements supported by regional advice.¹⁴ Consequently, to keep abreast of this increased *ucs* activity, this research's survey extended the number of *ucs* included to 22. However, the number of *ucs* within the survey set relating to any particular year does not represent the number of *ucs* completed in that year. Moreover, the early *ucs* in terms of their representation of the then total population are definitely over-represented when compared to the later studies (after 2000). This diminishes the reliability of the findings in relation to their time-related analysis. Nevertheless, given the intensity of this research's analysis of the *ucs*, widening the survey to include a larger number of *ucs*, more representative of the number of *ucs* completed since 2000, was not possible.

¹² This included: changes in *PPG3:2000* which required (among other things) that local authorities carried out *ucs*; *PPG11:2000* which commissioned regional authorities with the responsibility to oversee and co-ordinate the local authority efforts in assessing their *uc*; and *TiP* guidance document, which provided best practice guidance from the then-DETR to assist local authorities in developing their approaches to *uc* assessment through the use of an *ucs*.

¹³ Between *PPG3:2000* coming out in March, and *TiP* being published in December, and allowing authorities to assimilate the new information and expectations.

¹⁴ This advice has taken different forms.

The survey is not random, but instead is a stratified survey. This was because, firstly, the population was concealed and constantly changing, creating difficulties in establishing which *ucs* could be included in a random sample in the first instance. Regional assemblies were approached in March 1999 to find out the availability of *ucs* in their region; these approaches received a mixed response, which failed to clarify what *ucs* were available. However, the information gained from these telephone inquiries, and from previous surveys (see above), helped this research to identify *ucs* which could be used in this survey. Therefore, these *ucs* were effectively chosen rather than random. As it became apparent that the *ucs* would be chosen, a number of criteria were identified which needed to be adequately represented in the survey set (see *Figure 5.2*).

These criteria were that, firstly, the *ucs* included both *ucs* developed within the organisation (i.e in-house) and *ucs* which were developed by consultants. Particular consultants were not targeted, but given the publicity some *ucs* had received, and their inclusion in other surveys, some familiar studies were included in this survey set. These included Llewelyn-Davies' *ucs* for London: London SRQ Study¹⁵ (see *Figure 5.2* for a full list of *ucs* and for how this research has identified each one), and, for the North West Regional Assembly: North West Study Manual. They also included Baker Associates and Barton of University of West of England study for the South West Regional Planning Conference: South West Study, and the Arup Study for the North East Regional Assembly: The North East Arup Study.

¹⁵ This research has included more than one London study making it necessary to differentiate these studies by more than just its location. Llewelyn-Davies has also completed more than one study in London, therefore further definition is needed here too. Therefore this study is called London SRQ (Sustainable Residential Quality) Study to distinguish it from other studies. This is the name most frequently used in other texts e.g. *TtP*.

Figure 5.2 Summative table of this research's chosen ucs cohort (in chronological order)

Study Name*	Study Abbreviation in text
Urban Capacity Study for Wychavon	Wychavon Study
Hart District Council, Urban Housing Capacity Study: Final Report	Hart Study
South Hams Urban Housing Capacity Study	South Hams Study
New Housing in Urban Areas: Joint Replacement Structure Plan Draft Technical Report August 2001: Urban Housing Capacity Studies	Avon Study ¹⁶
Regional Planning Guidance for the North East: Update of Urban Capacity Study, Final Report	North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study
An Urban Capacity Study for Stoke-on-Trent 2001	Stoke Study
London's Housing Capacity: Report of Housing Study	London 2000 Study
A Study of the Urban Potential for Housing in Sheffield: Project Brief	Sheffield Study
Strategic Study of Urban Housing Potential: Final Report. South West Regional Planning Conference	South West Study
Wolverhampton: An Appraisal of Long Term Housing Land Capacity	Wolverhampton Study
Cambridge An Estimate of Urban Capacity	Cambridge Study
Housing Capacity in Urban Areas of the [East Midlands] Region: Final Report	East Midlands Study Manual
South Tyneside MBC Brownfield Potential Survey	South Tyneside Brownfield Study
Yorkshire and Humber Region Settlement Potential and Development Options Study: of Settlement Potential	Yorkshire and Humber Study
Sustainable Residential Quality: New Approaches to Urban Living	London SRQ Study
North of England Assembly Urban Capacity Study Final Report	North East Arup Study
Exploring Urban Potential for Housing: The Manual and Tool Kit	North West Study Manual
Halton Urban Capacity Study	Halton Study
Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council Urban Capacity: Final Report	Leicestershire/ Leicester Study
Urban Capacity Study in West Sussex: Technical Report for West Sussex Structure Plan, 3 rd Review	West Sussex Study
Hertfordshire Dwelling Provision: Through Planned Regeneration: Final Draft (Report)	Hertfordshire Study
London's Housing Capacity	London 1994 Study

* These ucs are all referenced in the bibliography by their authors- see Figure 5.2 (continued) overleaf for the authors' details.

¹⁶ Covers the area previously covered by the county of Avon: Bath, North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire.

Figure 5.2 (continued) Summative table of this research's chosen ucs cohort

Study Abbreviation in text	Date	Consultant/in-house
Wychavon Study	06/02	In-house (Wychavon District Council)
Hart Study	02/02	Baker Associates; design work by Landscape Design associates
South Hams Study	11/01	In-house (South Hams District Council)
Avon Study	08/01	In-house (Joint Strategic Planning and Transportation Unit)
North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study	04/01	Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners
Stoke Study	?/01	In-house (Stoke-on-Trent City Council)
London 2000 Study	09/00	In-house (Greater London Authority- GLA)
Sheffield Study	05/00	In-house (Sheffield City Council)
South West Study	01/99	Baker Associates, University of the West of England
Wolverhampton Study	?/98	Land Use Consultants, Melville Dunbar Associates, Professor A. Hooper (Nottingham Trent University)
Cambridge Study	12/98	In-house (Cambridge City Council)
East Midlands Study Manual	11/98	Entec and De Montfort University
South Tyneside Brownfield Study	?/98	In-house (South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council)
Yorkshire and Humber Study	07/98	Baker Associates, Chris Blandford Associates, Ken Conway Associates, Transportation Planning (International)
London SRQ Study	98	Llewelyn-Davies, Urban Investment Partnerships, London Research Centre, Savills
North East Arup Study	01/98	Arup
North West Study Manual	98	Llewelyn-Davies
Halton Study	07/97	Pieda plc Consultants, Ivor Samuels Urban Design
Leicestershire/Leicester Study	08/96	Arup
West Sussex Study	06/96	In-house (West Sussex County Council)
Hertfordshire Study	10/95	Urban Initiatives and Chesterton
London 1994 Study	06/94	In-house (London Planning Advisory Committee- LPAC)

Figure 5.2 (continued) Summative table of this research's chosen ucs cohort

Study Abbreviation in text	Full/ Partial study	Location (Region)	Authority Level
Wychavon Study	Full	West Midlands	District
Hart Study	Full	South East	District
South Hams Study	Full	South West	District
Avon Study	Full	South West	Sub-regional
North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study	Full	North East	Region
Stoke Study	Full	West Midlands	District (UA)
London 2000 Study	Full	London	Region
Sheffield Study	Full	Yorkshire and Humber	District (UA)
South West Study	Full	South West	Region
Wolverhampton Study	Full	West Midlands	District (UA)
Cambridge Study	Full	East	District
East Midlands Study Manual	Manual	East Midlands	Region
South Tyneside Brownfield Study	Partial	North East	District (UA)
Yorkshire and Humber Study	Full	Yorkshire and Humber	Region
London SRQ Study	Partial	London	Region
North East Arup Study	Full	North East	Region
North West Study Manual	Full	North West	Region
Halton Study	Full	North West	District (UA)
Leicestershire/Leicester Study	Full	East Midlands	County/sub region
West Sussex Study	Partial?	South East	County
Hertfordshire Study	Full	South East/East ¹⁷	County
London 1994 Study	Full	London	Region

Key

(UA) Unitary Authority

this research's particular interest in the evolution of the meaning of uc as expressed and its assessment-content, it would have been useful to see how the thinking of individuals who had carried out more than one uc had evolved, by revisiting some of the early study authorities, through the inclusion of their later uc and comparing these against each other. However, this was not possible given the time and resources available, but could be done as an extension to this research at a later date. Instead, to do this local level exploration of the evolution of uc in a particular locality, this research used a case study approach: this research's third window (see Chapter 10).

Other uc surveys, and the uc themselves, revealed a wide diversity in the assessment studies which called themselves uc. Here a number of distinctions can be made.

Firstly, some uc were more advisory manuals for other organisations to use in completing their uc than uc themselves. These have been referred to in this research as 'Study

¹⁷ At the time of production Hertfordshire was part of ROSE (Rest of South East), since regional reorganisation (1999) it has been part of the East Region.

Secondly, the *ucs* needed to represent different levels of governance: regional, sub-regional, local, county and unitary authorities; however, the regional activity was more pronounced during the early period of the survey (1999/2000). Therefore, regions as a tier of governance are more prevalent in the survey's earlier studies than the later studies because more regional *ucs* were completed earlier. However, this represents the pattern of *ucs* activity occurring throughout the period.

Thirdly, the *ucs* needed to represent all parts of the country (England), and not be predominantly from one place. Therefore, studies were chosen from different authorities according to region. Here a research issue has been that some regions started thinking about *uc* later than others, so some regions could not be well represented in the early trawl of *ucs* (1999/2000) and this had to be compensated for later (2001/2). As a result, particular regions are represented unevenly (e.g. the North West *ucs* appeared early and the West Midlands *ucs* appear later); and perhaps unrepresentatively throughout the period (e.g. the North West region's later activity may be under-represented). This may create some bias in the observed patterns of activity.

Fourthly, adding annually to the *ucs* survey cohort was considered important, to reflect the changes occurring in *ucs* as time and events went by. As previously noted these additions are not numerically representative of the *ucs* activity that has occurred since 2001. These additions included *ucs* from the regions which were less well represented in the original survey cohort, to strengthen the findings.

Given this research's particular interest in the evolution of the meaning of *uc* as expressed by the *ucs* methods and *ucs* assessment-content, it would have been useful to see how the thinking of authorities who had carried out more than one *ucs* had evolved, by revisiting some of the early study authorities, through the inclusion of their later *ucs* and comparing these against each other. However, this was not possible given the time and resources available, but could be done as an extension to this research at a later date. Instead, to do this local level exploration of the evolution of *uc* in a particular locality, this research used a case study approach- this research's third window (see chapter 10).

Other *ucs* surveys, and the *ucs* themselves, revealed a wide diversity in the assessment studies which called themselves *ucs*. Here a number of distinctions can be made.

Firstly, some *ucs* were more advisory manuals for other organisations to use in completing their *ucs* than *ucs* themselves. These have been referred to in this research as 'Study Manuals,' and include the East Midlands Study Manual, and the North West Study Manual.

The East Midlands Study Manual reflected on the main issues surrounding *uc*, included advice on bringing forward housing opportunities (Part 2) and included an *ucs* assessment method -the Common Framework- only as an appendix (Appendix C). In contrast, the North West Study Manual consisted entirely of an assessment method for the region's local authorities to use, and provided these authorities with the necessary design templates¹⁸ to complete the task.

Advisory manuals are predominantly offered from regional authorities to local authorities to ensure a level of co-ordination between their approaches to *uc*.¹⁹ However, the Wolverhampton Study, completed by advising consultants, was also something of a trial study, concentrating on sustainable principles and suggesting an assessment method to complete a Wolverhampton-wide *ucs*. Here the council appears to have commissioned consultants to develop a method for the council to use.²⁰

These *ucs* have been included as they have been influential locally, and sometimes more widely, and could not simply be dismissed. Moreover, other *ucs* surveys have included these manuals in their cohort. Furthermore, these more advisory studies often present more of their conceptual considerations, and given this research's interest, this alone would seem adequate justification for their inclusion.

In contrast, the other *ucs* were actual *ucs* that aimed to find the *uc* of a location. They included regional studies, for example North East Arup Study,²¹ South West Study and the Yorkshire and Humber Study. They also included city and borough councils, for example, Cambridge Study, Halton Study and Sheffield Study, and county authorities, for example, West Sussex Study, Leicestershire/Leicester Study, Hertfordshire Study.

Some *ucs* were collaborative, with more than one authority contributing and participating in the completion process of the *ucs*. This was particularly true at the regional level, e.g. London 1994 Study²² and London 2000 Study, South West Study, North East Arup Study;

¹⁸ An integral part of their method-type, described more fully in chapter 6.

¹⁹ This suggests a potentially interesting research project, on the way that *ucs* are being co-ordinated by different regions and what this might imply on the local/regional power associations.

²⁰ It is less clear whether the report is intended to be a study manual or not, as it considers quite a wide area of Wolverhampton. However, the document does suggest that it is a trial for a wider study to be completed from and could therefore be considered a study manual.

²¹ Here the North East Arup Study has been so called to distinguish it from another North East Study: the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study.

²² Here as already mentioned a number of London Studies were included. LPAC produced two of the London *ucs*, the distinguishing identification is the date. Therefore one study is identified as London 1994 Study and another is identified as London 2000 Study and a third is identified as the London SRQ Study. Here SRQ stands for Sustainable Residential Quality, which forms part of this study's title.

but also occurred at the county and sub-regional level, e.g. Leicestershire/Leicester Study and Avon Study; whilst other *ucs* were completed by, or for, a single authority, e.g. Cambridge Study, Stoke Study, Wychavon Study.

Another important distinction between *ucs* was that some indicated they were partial studies, only looking at some development opportunities, and others were full studies. Here, some *ucs* stated their intention to look only at some specific development opportunities, and to ignore others. This research has identified these as partial *ucs*. They include London SRQ Study; this concentrated on infill in backland, ‘*ped-sheds*’²³ and the conversion of houses into flats; West Sussex Study, which limited itself to windfall sites; and South Tyneside Brownfield Study,²⁴ which also concentrated solely on brownfield sites. A number of notable partial studies have not been included, e.g. studies that looked at office conversions into flats,²⁵ some studies looking at large sites²⁶ and LOTS²⁷ These are all London-based and would have created an over-representation of London within the survey. It also excluded Petherick and Barnett’s Stockton-on-Tees LOTS Study mentioned in chapter 2. However, the research does make comment from this study where it is appropriate (in chapter 7 and chapter 8), and it also recognises the significance of these studies for many *ucs*, which sometimes referenced them.²⁸

In contrast to these partial studies, other studies professed an intention to assess all the *uc* of an area, or at least to make an estimation representative of the whole *uc*. For the purposes of this research these studies have been accepted at face value as *ucs*. However these studies were not always successful in assessing all the *uc*, often missing one development-opportunity or another (see chapter 8). Here Urbed:1999 noted that at that time, no *ucs* had assessed every development opportunity, although London 2000 Study²⁹ came fairly close (*Figure 5.3*).

²³ These are terms used within the study (p.25) to reflect on particular types of in-filling and are more fully described in chapter 6.

²⁴ This study has been identified as South Tyneside Brownfield Study to distinguish it from South Tyneside’s other study: South Tyneside 2003 Study (Consultation Draft).

²⁵ London Property Research (1996). *Offices to Other Uses*. London: LPAC.

²⁶ Llewelyn-Davies et al (2000). *Sustainable Residential Quality: Exploring the Housing Potential of Large Sites*, and Halcrow Fox (1998). *Possible Future Sources of Large Housing Sites in London*.

²⁷ Civic Trust (1998). *Dwellings Over and In Shops in London*. London: LPAC.

²⁸ E.g. *Providing More Homes in Urban Areas* by Llewelyn-Davies and SAUS (1994), and Petherick and Fraser’s (1992) *Living Over the Shop: A Handbook for Practitioners* both appear to be referenced by Hertfordshire Study the former on p.3 and the latter on p.75-76; and Barlow J and Gann D (1993) *Offices into Flats* York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation is referenced by the North East Arup Study (p.14).

²⁹ Urbed reviewed the draft London 2000 Study in 1999.

Figure 5.3 Urbed's findings on the completeness of ucs in their exploration of the different opportunities which might provide additional housing (taken from Urbed: 1999 unpublished p.30)

	Vacant Sites					Other Development-Opportunities							Total Issues Covered	Estimated % Capacity Covered
	Large Sites	Small Sites	Housing Allocations	Industrial Allocations	Not Previously Developed	Redevelopment	Car-Parks	Non-Residential Conversions	Living Over the Shop	Residential Subdivision	Intensification	Empty Properties		
West Sussex													4	47 %
Chester	Not Applicable													
Yorkshire and Humber													6	37 %
Kent													5	36 %
London 1998/9*													10	89 %
Stroud													5	36 %
London- Large Sites													2	16 %
North East Region													7	63 %
London LOTS													1	16 %
Hertfordshire													5	42 %
South West Region													7	52 %
North West Region													8	72 %
Surrey													5	48 %
London SRQ													4	40 %
East Midlands													5	43 %
Coverage of Each Issue	7	11	5	11	4	3	2	7	4	8	9	3		

* This refers to the draft copy of the London 2000 Study

A further distinction amongst the *ucs* has been that most of the studies have treated *uc* as an assessment pertaining to housing alone, i.e. only considering housing development opportunities, and the impact of housing on localities. However, a few studies have treated it as a wider issue, either looking at other concerns: e.g. employment opportunities in the Halton Study,³⁰ and traffic issues in the Leicestershire/Leicester Study.

Finally, the *ucs* reports varied considerably in length and format, with some equating to a few pages (15 or so) whilst others ranged between 70 and 100. Some included designs in the main text whilst others did not rely on designs at all, and others placed designs in the appendices. The use of appendices also varied considerably in their content and length: e.g. the North West Study Manual was basically the *ucs* assessment method and the appendices were the tools needed to complete the method. In comparison, the East Midlands Study Manual placed the *ucs* assessment method in its appendices, and the bulk of its text reflected on the issues surrounding *uc* and how they might be overcome. Most *ucs* had some 'technical' data; e.g. tabulated information, calculations etc. in their appendices, and perhaps lists of appropriate sites, or particular forms used, or examples of how particular methods were worked out in practice. Again, the differences in the appendices' length and approach suggest differing levels of interaction with the concept of *uc* within the studies themselves.

Therefore the surveyed *ucs* are very different. However they all intend to assess *uc* as it was understood by the authority, and therefore this research, and others, all considered them to be *ucs*,³¹ and consequently eligible for this survey. Nevertheless, the differences are important because they influence the analysis in later chapters (chapter 7 and chapter 8). Where it is thought these influences have occurred, the research will try to make this clear, and reflect on this impact.

³⁰ Halton Study p.74-88 considers employment demand and p.110-120 considers employment supply and p.7-14 considers the location of employment and housing.

³¹ A glance at the titles of the various studies (*Figure 5.2*) will again indicate quite a range in the understanding of the concept of *uc* from the names alone. However, the studies themselves all appeared to deal with the issue of *uc*, and are thus considered to be *bona-fide ucs*.

5.3 The UCS Method Analysis

5.3.1 The Need for Method-Types

To analyse the different *uc assessment methods* for their conceptualisation of *uc*, a set of method-types was needed, firstly to facilitate analytical comparison across the different *ucs* methods used in the different *ucs*; and secondly to enable these *ucs* methods to be compared against this research's concept-models (chapter 3). Here the research considered other researches' sets of *ucs* method-types (Llewelyn-Davies', Entec's and Urbed's), to find an adequate set for this research's purposes.

When first required (1999/2000), this research identified three main existing classifications of method-types³² all connected to other *ucs* surveys and some *ucs*.³³

5.3.2 Llewelyn-Davies' Method-Types

The earliest set³⁴ emanated from Llewelyn-Davies' previously mentioned survey in *Urban Capacity and Housing*. This gave a guesstimation continuum, which reflected Llewelyn-Davies' opinion that *ucs* relied to varying degrees on guesstimation, which was dependent on the *ucs* methods' reliance upon projected/extrapolated data or on empirical evidence.

This work also began to draw out the underlying intention of the *ucs* purposes³⁵ to produce a method-set with four method-types:³⁶ extrapolation, quantification, exploration, and illumination.

The extrapolation and quantification method-types drew heavily from existing data, and according to Llewelyn-Davies, demonstrated the impact of existing conditions. The exploration method-types began to set aside existing conditions, particularly those set by policy, and instead began to consider 'what-if scenarios' to reflect on the ability of altering policy to maximise development-opportunity. The illumination method-types began to demonstrate the feasibility and liveability of these new what-if scenarios in ways that

³² These method-types do not appear to be equally well developed or used.

³³ These method-type sets were (i) the Llewelyn-Davies set: taken from Llewelyn-Davies' North West Study Manual (p.2) and Llewelyn-Davies' survey in *Housing and Urban Capacity* Report for the UK Round Table for Sustainable Development (1997); (ii) the Entec/De Montfort University set taken from East Midlands Study Manual p.18; (iii) the Urbed/*TtP* method-set taken from Urbed's *TtP* 1999 report (unpublished) and developed further in *TtP*- published by DETR in 2000.

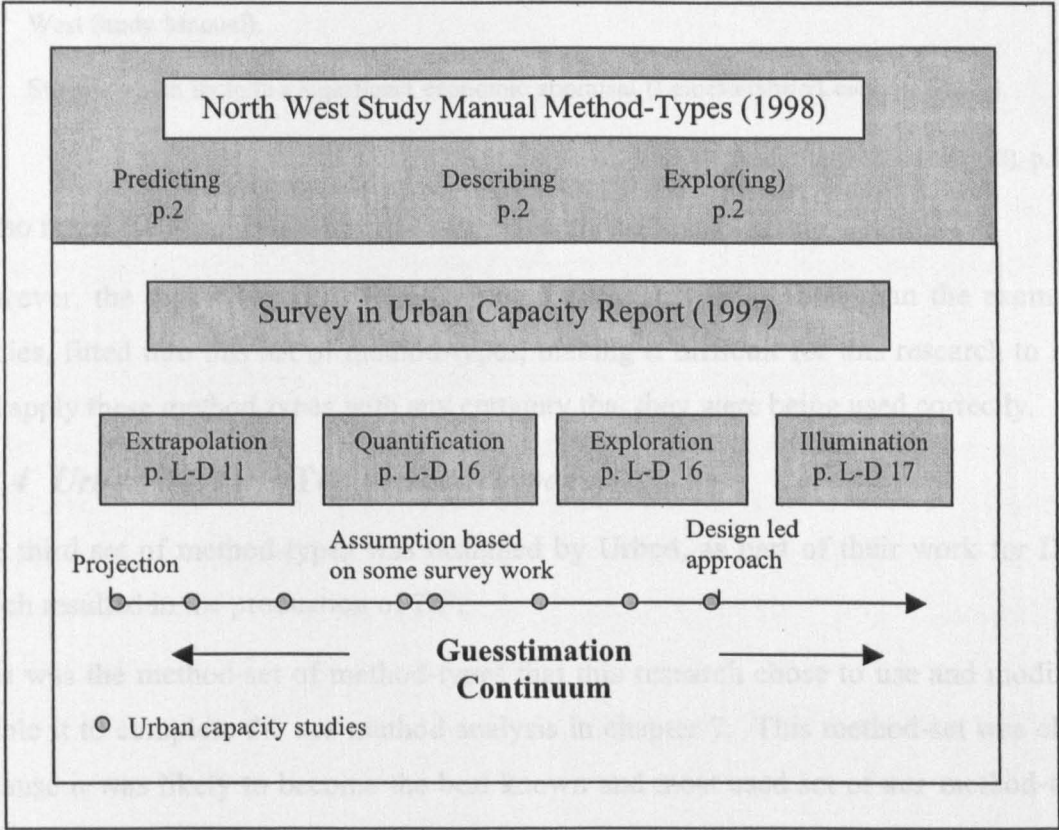
³⁴ As already mentioned see section 5.2.1.

³⁵ This gave an early suggestion of a link between study purpose/intention and study method which this research builds on.

³⁶ Which the study dismissed – see p.L-D 11 (the study's pagination includes the words 'Llewelyn-Davies'- identified in this research as L-D)- as having 'little value in terms of the Round Table's objective as a move away from historic trends is a prerequisite of achieving the objective'-effectively challenging the notion of *uc* as it is expressed through these methods and as it is depicted in Model 1 (see chapter 4).

would ‘educate’ others, notably the public, to change their thinking particularly on density. This was usually expressed through site designs to show that where high density development occurred it did not equate to poor quality living spaces. These method-types were further elaborated on in Llewelyn-Davies’ North West Study Manual (p.2) as predicting, describing and exploring, see *Figure 5.4*.

Figure 5.4 The method-types identified by Llewelyn-Davies³⁷



As can be seen, the Llewelyn-Davies method-types, such as they are, emphasised the *ucs* purpose rather than its assessment methods,³⁸ and *Housing and Urban Capacity* noted that many of these *ucs* method-types limited the purpose of the study, intentionally or otherwise.³⁹

³⁷ Taken and developed from Llewelyn-Davies description of their *guesstimation continuum*: *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.L-D 5) and North West Study Manual (p.2) method-types.

³⁸ Although Llewelyn-Davies does note some different method-types, extrapolating trend data, carrying out survey work and adopting a design-led method, and the report does demonstrate considerable interest in the method-types used.

³⁹ Suggesting that method-types can help or hinder the determination of *uc*. This implies that *uc* is both a fixed amount which needs to be found (albeit, perhaps considerably larger than an authority might previously have perceived it to be (Constrained Model), and/or a flexible amount which is derived more from socially constructed value systems and policy preferences (Opportunity Model), and that these are reflected in the method-types. It is this suggestion that this research builds on here.

5.3.3 Entec/De Montfort University's Method-Types

Entec and De Montfort University provided the second set of method-types⁴⁰ derived from their analysis of 15 *ucs*. This categorised the *ucs* into three method-types:

- Detailed design-led appraisals of small areas and then a grossing up exercise to assess the capacity of a larger area (e.g. Hertfordshire Study).
- Detailed case studies of particular localities and an examination of constraints (e.g. North West Study Manual).
- Studies which include a significant economic appraisal (Leicestershire/Leicester Study).

East Midlands Study Manual (1998), p.18

It also noted the weaknesses of these suggested method-types.

However, the report failed to explain how the *ucs* methods, other than the exemplary studies, fitted into this set of method-types, making it difficult for this research to adopt and apply these method-types with any certainty that they were being used correctly.

5.3.4 Urbed/DETR's TtP Method-Types

The third set of method-types was designed by Urbed, as part of their work for DETR which resulted in the production of *TtP*.

This was the method-set of method-types that this research chose to use and modify, to enable it to complete the *ucs* method analysis in chapter 7. This method-set was chosen because it was likely to become the best known and most used set of *ucs* method-types, given that the report from which it came was the government's best practice guidance.

In *TtP* the *ucs* method was effectively subdivided into a number of stages. Within each stage a number of different assessment methods were identified. Therefore, within any one stage, there were a number of method-types to choose from (i.e. a subset of stage-related method-types, identified in this research as stage-methods to differentiate them from any other kind of method), and to complete an *ucs*, method-types had to be chosen from each stage (see *Figure 6.1* chapter 6).

For purposes of clarification, this research uses the term **method-type** to describe a method in a single stage, and **aggregated-method-type** to describe the overall *ucs* assessment method (i.e. all the method-types from all the stages that an *ucs* has used to determine its

⁴⁰ Taken from Entec/De Montfort University's East Midlands Study Manual.

assessment of *uc*). How these stages and stage-methods work together is explained more fully in chapter 6, and the stages and the method-types are fully described there.

However, as this research adapts *TtP*'s proposed structure of an *ucs*, its assessment-content and its method-sets, *TtP*'s thinking and this research's alterations are outlined here to highlight the differences.

Stages of UC Assessment

The Area Identification Stage

TtP (p.9) suggested that the first stage was determining the spatial boundaries of the *ucs* area. Here *TtP* concentrated on describing what should and should not be included in this boundary definition, i.e. the area of the study's consideration, and the contents of the study -what should be looked at- not the method of how this should be done. *TtP* identified what needed to be defined and included in an *ucs* here as (i) the total-urban-area,⁴¹ and (ii) the development-opportunities.⁴² Both of these are described in more detail in section 5.7.

In this research, these elements have been categorised as *uc* assessment-content, rather than *uc* assessment method. They have been described in more detail in section 5.7 and their analysis occurs in chapter 8 under the consideration of the scope of an *ucs*, i.e. the (area) coverage of the study,⁴³ and the breadth of the study, i.e. the number of different types of development opportunity that an *ucs* explores.⁴⁴ Therefore, this research has not counted *TtP*'s (p.9) area identification stage as a stage, or taken any method-types from this stage.

The Survey Stage

TtP (p.17-22) suggested that the next stage is to gather information from which the *uc* of an identified urban area could be ascertained, i.e. surveying; hence the naming of this as the Survey stage. Here *TtP* concentrated on the survey methods that might be used, producing a sub-set of four Survey stage method-types these were identified as: (i) existing data, (ii) typical urban areas, (iii) priority areas, and (iv) comprehensive survey⁴⁵ method-types. These method-types are discussed in more detail below.

⁴¹ Total-urban-area here refers to the entire area classed as urban for the purposes of the *ucs*.

⁴² Development-opportunities depict any/all the types of development that could be used to create further housing, be they sites: car-parks, previously-developed-land etc, or buildings: offices, warehouses, house subdivision etc. The term also includes units which might need a different management strategy (e.g. empty homes strategy for reducing voids in rented accommodation) as well as the more obvious development opportunities of conversions and house building. Here *TtP*'s preferred term is 'sources' (p.10).

⁴³ The boundary of the total-urban-area (see also chapter 8 for further explanation).

⁴⁴ What development opportunities are looked at (see also chapter 8 for further explanation).

⁴⁵ These methods are fully described in chapter 6.

The Yield-Assessment Stage

Urbed suggested that this stage is to estimate the amount of housing yield that can be derived from the various development-opportunities, surveyed in the previous stage. Therefore it is called the Yield-Assessment stage. Here, too, Urbed focused on the methods used to make this assessment and produced a Yield- Assessment stage subset of three method-types: (i) Density-Multipliers, and (ii) Design-Led method-types -both used to calculate the housing yield of sites- and (iii) Yardsticks- used to calculate the housing yield from buildings.⁴⁶ Again, these method-types are discussed more fully below.

Discounting stage

Urbed's final stage was the Discounting stage. This is the point where the *ucs* accounts for aspects of the locality, site, or development process thought likely to hinder development. Here the estimate yield assessed by the first two stages (the Survey and Yield-Assessment stage) is reduced to reflect these hindrances.

Here *TtP* (p. 29-31) focused more on the *ucs* assessment-content: what constraints should be considered, rather than the *ucs* methods. *TtP* listed these constraints as (i) developability, (ii) market viability, (iii) local character, and (iv) planning standards. These are described in more detail in section 5.7.5 and are analysed as *ucs* assessment-content in chapter 8.

The only method-type *TtP* (p. 29-33) provided for this stage was 'Discounting' (discussed in more detail below).

5.3.5 This Research's Method-Types

This research adopted *TtP*'s stages (outlined above) and where possible it also adopted *TtP*'s method-types. However in a number of instances it was not possible to adopt them without adapting them a little. The reasons for these adaptations are outlined below, and a full description of this research's method-types is presented in chapter 6.

The Survey stage method-types

At the Survey stage this research adopted *TtP*'s set of method-types (see above), but made some modifications. Firstly, with regard to the Priority-Area method-type, this research observed a difference in the way that different types of urban area were approached (fully explained in chapter 6). Therefore in this research this method-type has been subdivided

⁴⁶ I.e. through conversions in the buildings' uses, the subdivision and extension of residential property, and through improved property management reducing the number of long term vacant properties.

into two: (i) Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic, and (ii) Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic. Consequently, in this research the survey stage method subset has five rather than four method-types.

Secondly, this research has also slightly altered *TtP*'s terminology. Where *TtP* identified a particular survey method-type as a 'comprehensive' survey this research has renamed it 'Total-Coverage-Survey'.⁴⁷ This change was made because 'comprehensive' seemed to be a term which could relate too easily to a variety of different aspects of the *ucs* methods and was therefore thought to be confusing.⁴⁸ Therefore, 'comprehensive' has been used to describe and analyse the study methods, not to label them. 'Total-Coverage' was chosen because it seemed to reflect the intention of the particular survey method-type, which aimed to look at all the development-opportunities of the whole urban area. All the Survey stage method-types are described fully in chapter 6 and analysed in chapter 7.

The Yield-Assessment stage method-types

As with the Survey stage method-types, this research adopted *TtP*'s method-types (see above) but also made some alterations on the grounds of its own observations and others' research.

Here *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.L-D11) was highly critical of extrapolation or forecasting as a method for assessing housing yield, and *TtP* does not offer it as an option. However, as some of the surveyed *ucs*, e.g. Cambridge Study (p.15), Stoke Study (p.4), use trends to calculate the yield particularly from certain types of building, this method-type (i.e. Yield-Trends method-type) has been included in this research's Yield-Assessment stage method-type set.

Finally, Urbed distinguished Yardsticks as the only way to calculate the housing yield achieved through the alteration of buildings. However, within this method-type (Yardsticks) there is considerable variation in the formulae that are used (see chapter 6 and chapter 7). This has research implications at the point where the aggregated-methods of the *ucs* are considered (see section 5.6.2 below for fuller explanation) as the non-inclusion of yardsticks suggests that the *ucs* fails to consider some development-opportunities.

⁴⁷ The method itself is fully described in chapter 6.

⁴⁸ E.g. it could be used to express the depth of detail, the breadth of coverage, or the area covered (all content considerations reflected on chapter 8), as well as the method that was used.

TtP only offered one method-type at this stage: Discounting, and consequently called this stage the Discounting stage. However, this single method-type does not represent the range of methods to be found in the *ucs*. Therefore in this research the stage was renamed the Constraints-Consideration stage, to reflect the purpose of the stage which estimates the impact of the constraints on the development-opportunities, and how they prevent development from occurring. *TtP* described one method-type at this stage and called it Discounting. Consequently this research has called this method-type 'Discounting'.

This lack of method consideration at *TtP*'s Discounting stage was problematic for this research's need for method-types to help with its analysis, particularly as this research's *ucs* survey suggested many more methods than could be adequately represented by Discounting. Therefore, as *TtP* did not provide adequate method-types for this stage, this research developed its own method-types from the *ucs* survey set.

Here the research made the same distinction it made elsewhere between the *ucs* assessment-content: what was looked at, i.e. the constraints- developability, e.g. problems of land assembly etc. (see section 5.7.6 and chapter 8); and the *ucs* assessment method: how it was looked at, i.e. the techniques through which the constraints were appraised.

Here the constraints were identified firstly by *TtP* (p.29-32): i.e. developability, market viability, local character, and planning standards, and to this list were added social acceptability -which appeared to be an identified constraint in some *ucs* (e.g. East Midlands Study Manual Annex C p.11-14)-⁴⁹ and environmental capacity- which was also an issue of concern raised in *ucs* (West Sussex Study).

The method-types for this stage were identifiable as different development and environmental appraisal methods. These methods are likely to, and do, vary from study to study, and in some *ucs* more than one appraisal method has been used, but underpinning all the methods is the idea that the technique aims to be a way (or a method) of determining the impact of the constraint. The methods differ but the aim to appraise impact remains the same in all the methods used.

The methods that have been identified for this stage through the various *ucs* in the survey are: (i) Constraint-Trends,⁵⁰ (ii) Constraints-Discussion,⁵¹ (iii) Technical- Modelling,⁵² (iv)

⁴⁹ Although this was a more minor part of its 'Method Framework.'

⁵⁰ Taken from Cambridge Study.

⁵¹ Taken from North East Arup Study.

⁵² Taken from Leicestershire/Leicester Study.

Focus-Group/Perception-Survey,⁵³ (v) Scoring-Matrices,⁵⁴ (vi) Levels-of-Difficulty-Matrices.⁵⁵ These methods have been added to the method suggested by *TtP* (p.29-33) – (vii) Discounting,⁵⁶ to make up this stage’s subset of method-types. These method-types have been described in chapter 6, and analysed in chapter 7.

Therefore to complete its *ucs* assessment-method analysis this research has produced three stage-related sub-sets of method-types. They are:

- For the Survey stage:
 - Existing-Data, Typical-Urban-Areas, Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic, Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic, and Total-Coverage-Survey.
- For the Yield-Assessment stage:
 - Density-Multipliers, Design-Led approach, Yardsticks, and Yield- Trends.
- For the Constraints-Consideration stage:
 - Constraint-Trends, Constraints-Discussion, Technical-Modelling, Focus-Group/Perception-Surveys, Scoring-Matrices, Levels-of- Difficulty-Matrices, and Discounting.

As already demonstrated, these have been adopted and adapted from *TtP*, and will be fully described in chapter 6.

5.3.6 The Government’s Method-Type Preferences

Part of chapter 6 reflects on the preference government had for certain method-types, these government preferences have been derived from reflecting on the government’s critique of the method-types that the government documents described. These government critiques have been taken primarily from *TtP* but also from *Housing and Urban Capacity*.

These critiques have been further used in the later stages of this research’s analysis, to explore whether the government’s preference for some method-types over others is reflective of any particular conceptual bias to be found in relation to the method-types’ own particular biases towards the Constrained or Opportunity Models’ conceptualisation of *uc* (see below for how the method-types’ biases were established and chapter 7 for this element of the research’s analysis). This in turn has been used in relation to the way

⁵³ Taken from Hertfordshire Study, East Midlands Study Manual.

⁵⁴ Taken from North West Study Manual.

⁵⁵ Taken from South West Study and Yorkshire and Humber Study.

⁵⁶ *TtP* p.29-33, used in Sheffield Study, Hart Study.

government has argued *uc*, to see how consistent their thinking has been, and also in relation to the *ucs* methods used to see how consistent the relationship between practice and advice appears to be. (chapter 7 and chapter 10).

However, as *TtP* did not present this research's subset of method-types in the Constraints-Consideration stage in the same way,⁵⁷ it was not possible to critique these method-types using *TtP*. Therefore, this research used statements from other government affiliated documents, notably *Housing and Urban Capacity*, to gain an insight into government's thinking on the various method-types presented. This too has been presented in chapter 6 as part of the government preference analysis.

5.4 This Research's Treatment of the UCS

This research's *ucs* survey-method has already been discussed and the *ucs* identified (see *Figure 5.2*). Here, the research will reflect on how these *ucs* were considered in relation to this research's method-types described above, to enable it to complete the analysis.

The *ucs* methods⁵⁸ found within the *ucs* were identified as fitting more or less neatly into one or other of the various method-types (described above). Here it was noted whether the *ucs* method fitted the ascribed method-type well or not, and the reasons were recorded.⁵⁹ The fit of the *ucs* is discussed at the head of this research's method analysis (section 7.2). The reason for the difference in fit between the method-types and the *ucs* methods used in the *ucs*, is due to the method-types being ideal,⁶⁰ whilst the *ucs* methods used and applied in the *ucs* were not. This resulted in discrepancies between the method-types and the *ucs* methods.

Once the *ucs* methods' fit in relation to this research's method-types was established, they were analysed in relation to these method-types, to explore the method-types that were being used, how, and how this reflected the understanding of *uc*. This analysis included the individual method-types of a particular stage, exemplified by *ucs* methods, being analysed against this research's *uc* concept-models (the Constrained Model and the Opportunity Model), and in relation to the other method-types in the same stage. This

⁵⁷ Disregarding all the method-types being used in the *ucs* and suggesting an alternative.

⁵⁸ The *ucs* methods have been identified as *ucs* **method(s)** to differentiate between the *ucs* methods as they have been used and **applied** in their respective *ucs* and this research's **method-types**.

⁵⁹ E.g. the North East Nathaniel Lichfield study fitted this research's method-types poorly because it used existing studies extensively which had hidden methods within them, and it then extrapolated these studies' results. Broadly it fitted into the (Survey stage) Existing-Data method-type, and the (Yield-Assessment and Constraints-Consideration stages) Trends method-type.

⁶⁰ I.e. the methods as they are described in chapter 6 are implemented in the way that they are described, and work in the ways that are indicated.

research method of analysis is described more fully below, and is discussed in detail in chapter 7.

Having established the conceptual understanding of the stage method-types, the research then explored the method-types when they were aggregated together to make up the total assessment method of an *ucs* (the aggregated-method). Here the research used diagrammatic representations to express what appeared to be occurring (see section 7.7). How these representations were used to analyse the *ucs* methods is reflected upon below (section 5.6.2), and the analysis is discussed in chapter 7 (section 7.7).

The *ucs* cohort has also been tabulated in date order of studies by their method-types (see *Figure 7.17*), to reveal any time-related observable patterns (these tables have been called timelines in this research), and the analysis of this table is in chapter 7.

Finally this research considered the findings of chapter 7 in relation to the government preferences (discussed in chapter 6) to explore the impact of government thinking on practitioners' practices in completing an *ucs*.

5.5 Characterisations- the Link between Concept-Model, Method-Types, and Assessment-Content

This research is based on the premise that *uc* is defined in part by how it is assessed. Therefore, the *ucs* methods used in an *ucs*, and the *ucs* assessment-content are an expression of that particular authority's perception of *uc*: i.e. the *ucs* methods and assessment-content are effectively a translation of the authority's understanding of the *uc* concept, as it relates to their situation; and a reflection of *uc*'s own need to be assessed. This is because an authority finds and uses methods they believe calculate the localities' available *uc* in their locations. Therefore the *ucs* methods that are used and the *ucs* assessment-content that is included effectively express their understanding of *uc* and also help to further define it through the choices they make.

Consequently, this research needed a way to link the *uc* concept-models (chapter 4) to the method-types (described above). Here the research identified a number of key *ucs* variables, which had previously been identified in the concept-models of chapter 4, and analysed these. These key variables were identified as urban-areas, development-opportunity, policy, and constraints hindering development-opportunities. The important feature of these variables was how they were characterised, firstly in the concept-models' argumentation to establish how the two concept-models characterised them; and secondly

in the method-types, drawing from the method technique and premises, and supported through examples taken from the survey of *ucs*.

This provided the research with a link⁶¹ which enabled the conceptualisation of *uc* expressed in the *ucs* methods, found in the method-types, to be compared against the conceptualisation of *uc* as it was expressed in the concept-models and their supporting argumentation.

This link was used to analyse how these variables were being characterised across the methods in relation to the concept-models' positions on *uc*. From this it was possible to explore any emerging patterns, firstly within the method-types themselves (section 7.2-section 7.5), and then across the method-types (section 7.6). Secondly, when combined with the observations of the government's preferences for particular method-types (see chapter 6), it was possible to look for patterns of preference towards methods that favoured particular constructions of *uc*. Thirdly, and finally, when the *ucs* in the survey were placed on a timeline and the method-types used in these studies were compared, it was possible to see if the choice of *ucs* method-types had changed over time, and whether they appeared to be changing in line with the way that *uc* as an idea appeared to be evolving in the government argumentation (see chapter 4).

5.6 Description of the Analysis of the UCS Method-Types

5.6.1 Analysing the Stages and Method-Types

The different method-types' characterisations of the different variables were formatted into a proforma, one for each method-type (see *Figure 5.5*). This proforma included the main method-type premise above the tabulated information, to establish the premise on which each method-type appeared to be based. The variables were listed down the left hand side of the table and characteristics of these variables which emerged through an observation of the method-type's premise and technique were recorded under the heading 'characterised as': Evidence from the *ucs* that used these method-types was recorded alongside these observations. This process was completed for every method-type, and the method-types were grouped for analysis into the appropriate stage (i.e. all the Survey stage method-types were grouped together, and so on for each stage).

⁶¹ I.e. the characterisation of these variables.

Figure 5.5 An example of the method-type proforma⁶²

Survey Stage Method-Types: Total-Coverage-Survey Method-Type
Premise: The development-opportunities are unknown, needing further investigation in the light of addressing the discovery of <i>uc</i> as a particular problem

Variable	Characterised as	Evidence
Urban Area	Internally dynamic and unpredictable.	Opportunities subject to change, therefore need to survey. E.g. South Tyneside's survey found that even as surveyed, sites came and went in development process.
	Not fully known.	South Tyneside discovered discrepancies in existing-data; old and in some cases inaccurate.
	Made up of atypical sites and opportunities.	South Tyneside reviewed whole area, did not try to characterise one area, or one site type as typical.
Policy	Flexible- can be determined on the information that is found.	This is the variable least characterised in this method-type. But it allows for policy flexibility as the data is gathered, and opportunities have been viewed.
	Anticipated that it will be proactive.	TtP p.18-19.
Development-Opportunities	All development-opportunities investigated.	Either as part of one study e.g. South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft) Or as suite of studies e.g. London 2000 study and its support studies: London SRQ, Large Sites, Offices into Flats etc.
	Development-opportunities likely to be treated specifically, not generically.	Sites have been investigated, so do not need to generalise, e.g. TtP p.19 ' <i>By definition data provided by [an alternative method] will not be as robust as that gained from [total-coverage-surveys]</i> '.
Constraints	Not fully known and need to be investigated.	South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft) investigating opportunities discovered discrepancies from existing information, and what was actually there.
URBAN CAPACITY	Unknown needs to be explored with a view to maximisation of development.	Sites have been investigated, therefore less need to characterise them in generic terms, e.g. many studies explore specific site opportunities.

⁶² This proforma was done for the Total-Coverage-Survey Method-Type, but other proformas were filled out for other method-types. These were compared across the stages i.e. all the method-types of a particular stage were compared against each other.

Once formatted and grouped, the method-types were compared against each other, against the concept-model proformas⁶³ and against the stage proformas.⁶⁴ It was noted that the variables⁶⁵ differed in importance at different stages, and the research analysis followed this lead. Consequently at the Survey stage the main focus was on the urban-areas and development-opportunities; the Yield-Assessment stage focused on policy, and the Constraints-Consideration stage centred on constraints and some policy.⁶⁶

This formatted material drew out some conclusions on how individual method-types at each stage, and individual *ucs* stages within the aggregated-method, had characterised the different variables, and how this reflected different *uc* conceptualisations⁶⁷ (see chapter 7). It was also possible to see patterns emerging in the method-types at the different stages, and across the stages.⁶⁸ This too is discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

Chapter 7's analysis opens by considering the fit of the *ucs* methods to the stage method-types, it then considers how the different stages seem to consider *uc*, and whether these reflections suggest a stage bias towards Constrained Model or Opportunity Model.⁶⁹

5.6.2 *Analysing the Aggregated-Method-Types*

The research then explored the aggregated-method, to reveal how the method-types, when taken together as a whole *ucs*, conceptualise *uc*. However, finding a research method to do this was problematic as a quick calculation indicated that the total number of possible method pathways any individual *ucs* could take was too high for all the options to be considered individually- about 280 options.⁷⁰

Consequently, the research took a different approach. It started by constructing some illustrative diagrams of idealised Constrained Model and Opportunity Model method-

⁶³ Which had been constructed in the same way, but had used argumentation evidence gained from the argumentation texts rather than *ucs* for evidence.

⁶⁴ Which were evidenced by *TiP* commentary as to how the stages should work.

⁶⁵ Urban-areas, development-opportunities, policy and constraints.

⁶⁶ The stages consider the other variables, but not as fully as the particular variable that the stage focuses on.

⁶⁷ In answer to question 2 cited in section 5.1.

⁶⁸ Also answers question 2 in section 5.1. However additionally it answers question 1 cited in section 5.1.

⁶⁹ The word 'bias' does not imply something negative; it simply demonstrates that some methods are closer to the *uc* concept as depicted in this research's Constrained Model, and that others are closer to this research's Opportunity Model *uc* concept.

⁷⁰ This assumes an *ucs* uses one method at each stage, except at the Yield-Assessment stage. Here they have a choice of either using one method or two (one for buildings and one for sites), i.e 5 Survey options, 4 Yield-Assessment options (either used singularly or together), and 7 Constraints-Consideration options gives a calculation of $5 \times (4 \times 2) \times 7 = 280$ options.

types. These are discussed in more detail in chapter 7 (see section 7.7).⁷¹ They were constructed out of the analysis of the *ucs* method-types and stages, (discussed in the first sections of chapter 7). They provided an idealised representation of how stage method-types pertaining to the Constrained Model and Opportunity Model would assess *uc*, against which examples of different *ucs*' aggregated-methods could be compared.

The research then identified five possible method-type pathways through the stages that could be chosen by an authority completing an *ucs*, and which were expected to influence the conceptual outcomes of *uc*. These pathways were called aggregated-method-type scenarios, and where possible they were exemplified by an *ucs*. These aggregated-method-type scenarios were:

- Scenario 1: Expansive method-types at all stages:

The research anticipated this would reflect a method-type bias in keeping with the Opportunity Model.

It used the North West Study Manual to explore this aggregated-method-type scenario.

- Scenario 2: Restrictive method-types at all stages:

The research anticipated this would reflect a method-type bias in keeping with the Constrained Model.

It used the Cambridge Study as an example of this aggregated-method-type scenario.

- Scenario 3: Restrictive method-types at the Survey stage and the Yield-Assessment stage, but more expansive method-types at the Constraint-Consideration stage:

Here the research was less sure what the method-type bias might be, when compared to the Concept-models but thought it might be in keeping with the Constrained Model.

It used the Yorkshire and Humber Study to explore this aggregated-method-type scenario.

⁷¹ They would have been discussed in detail here along with the rest of this research's analysis methods, but they drew so strongly from the findings of the earlier analysis that this analysis needs to be presented first. Consequently this research method is described in full after the earlier analysis on which it is built has been explained, and before it is used.

- Scenario 4: Expansive method-types at the Survey stage and Yield-Assessment stage, but restrictive method-types at the Constraint-Consideration stage: ⁷²

Here the research was less sure what the method bias might be.

The example study here was the Wychavon Study.

- Scenario 5: Only one method-type used to calculate the yield-assessment:

This suggests that some of the development-opportunity, either buildings or sites, was likely not to be reflected upon. Consequently the method-type bias was anticipated to be in keeping with the Constrained Model.

The study chosen here was the South Tyneside Brownfield Study.

These scenarios were discussed through the use of illustrative diagrams constructed from the method-types and the method-type analysis, and exemplified by the *ucs* methods of the example *ucs*, to reflect these particular *ucs*' method choices and the way they had applied these method-types.

This research choice of example *ucs* was informed by the earlier analysis, which had already identified method-types and their particular biases, and had already ascertained which *ucs* used which method-types (see *Figure 7.17*). From this it was possible to decide which *ucs* could be used in relation to which aggregated-method scenario. The research had also already ascertained the closeness of fit between the different *ucs*' use of their chosen methods and the method-types (see chapter 7), and the *ucs* examples chosen were ones which were more similar to these method-types.

As already indicated, this analysis focused on how the aggregated-methods of *ucs* related to this research's concept-models, to observe what the impact of different aggregated-method choices were on the way *uc* was being conceptualised, and the ability of the *ucs* to assess *uc* accordingly.

5.6.3 The Distinction Between Method-Types and Applied-Methods

In this research (in chapter 7) a distinction was made between the term 'method-types', and the term 'applied-methods'. The **method-types** refer to the generic ideal methods which typify a particular category of method. In contrast, the **applied-methods** are how these method-types are actually used -or applied- in an *ucs*.

⁷² This appears to be *TfP*'s advised aggregated-method-type scenario (see section 7.7.1).

Therefore this research will refer to the method-type(s) when it is discussing aspects of the generic method(s), e.g. a comment about the design-led method-type; and it will refer to applied-method(s) when it is discussing example material taken from the *ucs*, e.g. a comment about the applied design-led method in a particular *ucs*.

As has been seen, the method-types of the differing *ucs* stages within an *ucs* build-up into aggregated-stage-method-types. These too are generic and ideal, and within this research will be referred to as the aggregated-method-type(s). However, here again, material from the *ucs* has been used to exemplify the points. This material again was applied, and the distinction between the aggregated-method-types and the *ucs* material needed to be made. Consequently the *ucs* method was identified as the applied-aggregated-method.

This term applied-aggregated-method was used within the confines of this detailed analysis in chapter 7 for the purposes of discrimination, but elsewhere this research has adopted the more familiar *uc* assessment method which equates to one of the three expressions of *uc*, identified in section 3.2.

5.6.4 The Possible Bias of the Government's Preferences for Particular Method-Types

Finally, as already mentioned, by looking at the government preferences for particular method-types and the 'biases' of these method-types, it was possible to extend this research's observations on the government preferred method-types identified in chapter 6, to consider if these preferences related to the particular method-type biases (in relation to this research's Constrained and Opportunity Models), and whether these preferences were consistent for method-types in every stage. Furthermore, it was possible to compare these findings (the bias in the government's preferred method-types, against its argumentation bias already noted in chapter 4), to see how consistently government appeared to be holding its view in the various expressions of *uc* (here argumentation and *ucs* method assessment). These findings are raised in chapter 7, and further elaborated on in relation to this research's concern about the meaning and conceptual evolution of the idea of *uc* in chapter 10.

5.7 Description of Analysis of the Assessment-Content of UCS

5.7.1 The Content of the UCS

This research makes an analytical distinction between the *ucs* methods explored through the method-types (see above) and the *ucs* assessment-content. The *ucs* assessment-content relates to the substantive content, i.e. what is considered in an *ucs*, rather than how it is

considered. (This analysis is presented in chapter 8). This distinction between *ucs* methods and *ucs* assessment-content is artificially strengthened by this research's chapter division (between chapter 7 and 8). In reality the *ucs* methods work in conjunction with the material the *ucs* intends to explore. Nevertheless, for organisational purposes, this research has found it necessary to explore the two as though distinct.

The purpose and design of an *ucs* is to assess this *uc*. Therefore the *ucs* assessment-content actually constitutes the assessed *uc*, and is consequently more than just an expression of the *uc*. It is in fact what constitutes *uc* and how much *uc* there is. However, it is also an expression of *uc*, consequently demonstrating how *uc* is being perceived and, as such, reflects and helps further determine the assessment definition of *uc*. This *uc* expression is portrayed in the way this assessment-content material is presented within the *ucs*. It is this expression of *uc* that the analysis in chapter 8 seeks to explore through reflecting on a further subset of questions. These are:

1. What is included in an assessment of *uc*, and what does this say about the meaning of *uc*?
2. How is this material portrayed and used and how does this influence the concept of *uc*?
3. What is the government advice on what should be included, and how it should be reflected upon- and does this suggest a particular construction of *uc*?
4. Has the content of what is being considered changed over time?

As with the subset of questions relating to the *ucs* method expression of *uc*, these questions were asked to elicit findings that inform the main research's interest in: what is meant by *uc*, whether it has changed its meaning, how, why, and to what effect?

The *ucs* assessment-content can be broken down into different types of content. Here *TtP* makes a distinction between (i) the total-urban-area- the geographical area of the *ucs*' investigation; (ii) development-opportunities-categories - these are different types of development opportunity which *TtP* lists; (iii) constraints-categories- these are the constraints which hinder development. This research has adapted these categories slightly:

- Total-urban-area

This is the geographical area that *ucs* identify as the area of investigation. This sets the geographical limits of the study (the boundaries), and defines the spatial area to be

covered by the study, and by so doing reflects and determines how the *ucs* is understanding the term 'urban'.

Here the name has been changed in this research for reasons of clarification, distinguishing the total-urban-area from the urban-areas.

- Urban-areas

Many *ucs* have subdivided the total-urban-area into smaller areas sharing the same characteristics. These have been called 'typical-urban-areas',⁷³ 'priority areas',⁷⁴ or 'focus locations'.⁷⁵ In this research they have been referred to as 'urban-areas'.

This category has been added, because urban-areas are widely discussed in the *ucs*. However, it is primarily used in this research's assessment method analysis in chapter 7 rather than its content analysis in chapter 8.

- Development-opportunities

TtP (p.10) referred to these as 'sources' of development. *TtP* (p.10-16) identified different types of development-opportunity likely to produce additional housing yield. e.g. the conversion of houses into flats, the development of car-parks, etc. (for a full list see section 5.7.3 below). This sets the definitional parameters of an understanding of *uc* by the inclusions, exclusions⁷⁶ and omissions⁷⁷ of these development-opportunities in an *ucs*. The characterisation and treatment of the development-opportunities also reflect and determine the *ucs* understanding of *uc*.

- Constraints

TtP (p.30) referred to hindrances that prevent development from occurring as 'factors which will bear on whether the unconstrained yield can be realised'. This research has referred to them as constraints and provides a full list (*TtP* p.30-33) (see section 5.7.6). As with the development-opportunities, the inclusions, exclusions or omissions of these constraints, and the way they are characterised, both reflect and influence how *uc* is being understood.

⁷³ South West Study (p.13-17), Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.7).

⁷⁴ *TtP* (p.20).

⁷⁵ North West Study Manual (p.16).

⁷⁶ Where the *ucs* indicate an expressed intention not to include the development-opportunity in the assessment.

⁷⁷ Where a development-opportunity is not included, but no indication is given as to whether this is intentional or not on the part of the *ucs*.

In this research a fifth category, planning policy, has been identified, although this is primarily explored as a sub-category of the constraints.

- Planning policy

In *TtP* (p.32) planning policy was alluded to and identified in the constraints, suggesting that it is perceived as having a negative impact on development-opportunities. However, elsewhere in some of the method-types, notably at the Yield-Assessment stage, *TtP* suggested that planning policy should be explored and should not be taken as given. Here planning policy appears to be a generator of increased yield. Therefore this research defined planning policy as a separate *uc* assessment-content category.

Taken together, the inclusions, exclusions, and omissions of the total-urban-area, the development-opportunities considered and the constraints applied, including planning constraints, in an *ucs*, effectively establish definitional assessment boundaries of what can/cannot, or of what will/will not, be looked at in the *ucs*, thereby establishing an assessment definition of what is meant by *uc*. Furthermore, the way these variables are characterised and treated also helps to define how *uc* is being interpreted within this expression of *ucs*.

Therefore, the *ucs* assessment-content and its treatment express how *uc* is being conceptualised by the *ucs*' authors, as well as influencing this understanding. Furthermore, this expression also provides an insight into how the authors are conceptualising the function of the concept of *uc*, the function of the *ucs*, and the context in which *uc* is being explored.⁷⁸ This too has an iterative impact on how *uc* is further assessed and understood. These insights can be compared with the conceptualisation of *uc* as depicted in the two concept-models (developed in chapter 4), to explore how *uc* is being understood, and whether this has changed.

TtP discussed the *ucs* assessment-content in the ways outlined above, and in some instances indicated what should and should not be included, reflecting particularly on the development-opportunities and the constraints. **This research** used *TtP* content categories: **constraint** categories, but renamed 'urban area' to **total-urban-area** and 'sources' as **development-opportunities** categories, which were thought to be a clearer identification, and planning policy was reviewed primarily as one of the constraint categories.

⁷⁸ By context this research means the way the study relates the concept to other concepts or the study's perspective of the concept in its wider discussion.

This research also adopted *TtP*'s sub-categories for development-opportunities and constraints, to identify the different kinds of development-opportunities and constraints an *ucs* is currently being expected to explore. However, due to the contents found in the *ucs*, this research extended these categories. These category lists are explained more fully below (section 5.7.3 and section 5.7.5 below).

However, although for research purposes the *ucs* assessment-contents have been subdivided into these categories, in reality these categories are not isolated, but rather relate to and influence one another, so that the characterisation or omission of one is likely to influence others. This is particularly true with regard to the relationship between the development-opportunities and the way the total-urban-areas are characterised, and also between the development-opportunities and the constraints.

This interplay between the total-urban-area, the development-opportunities and the constraints is quite a complex one. The total-urban-area, however it is defined, is the locality where the development-opportunities can be found and where the constraints can be argued to apply. Consequently, how the total-urban-area is defined and portrayed is firstly an expression of how *uc* is being understood in terms of what is considered 'urban', but it is also likely to have a subsequent bearing on how the development-opportunity is understood. Similarly, what development-opportunities are considered, and the way they are characterised, also expresses an understanding of *uc* on its own, but again, what has been included and its characterisation is likely to have an influence on what constraints are considered and how. Finally, the constraints, including planning policy, also reflect and influence the understanding of *uc* on their own, and also through the way they interact with other categories. Therefore there is considerable inter-connectivity between the different elements of the *ucs* assessment-content.

This said, the research has looked at the assessment-content of the *ucs* in terms of their (i) total-urban-area coverage- the geographical boundaries of the total-urban-area that was explored; (ii) the range of development-opportunity categories they chose to consider; (iii) the space given to the constraints and policy to understand and explore them. In each instance, this research is concerned with how the inclusions, exclusions and omissions, and the characterisation of the various categories of *uc* assessment-content have expressed and influenced the understanding of *uc* in the light of the research questions.

5.7.2 *This Research's Analysis of the Total-Urban-Area*

This research reflected on the geographical area that was covered in the *ucs* and how it was defined. Many of the *ucs* and *TtP* (p.9) itself referred to this as the urban area, but to increase clarity this research has called this geographical area the **total-urban-area**.⁷⁹ It effectively mirrors *TtP*'s (p.9) area identification, and considers how the *ucs* had defined *uc* through the area they geographically included and excluded, and how this expressed *uc*. The research also considers the characterisations the *ucs* ascribed to their respective total-urban-areas, through the way the total-urban-area information was formatted- largely determined from the authorities' interpretation of the total-urban-area, and how this related to the concept of *uc*- determined by this research's concept-models.

The research identified a number of different ways that the total-urban-area was identified, bounded and characterised- these are explored in terms of their likely impact on the conceptualisation of *uc* in chapter 8 (section 8.2): These ways of identifying the total-urban-area were:

- Administratively:

taking the whole administrative boundary as the area of *ucs*.

- Statistically:

using the population statistics to determine different sizes of towns and including towns above a certain size into the *ucs*.

Within this identification method the town size varied from >1000 (including most settlements) to >10,000 (excluding many).

- Policy designated:

this emphasised particular designated towns as being the place for future development (Key Towns).

- Sustainably:

a number of *ucs* determined their total-urban-area using some form of sustainable principles such as the proximity to local services.

⁷⁹ Many of the *ucs* identified the whole area they covered as the urban area, and if they used a Typical-Urban-Area method-type or a Priority-Area method-type, these typical-urban-areas were referred to as urban-areas, so for this research a stronger distinction between 'the urban area' and 'urban-areas' was thought necessary.

- According to local features:

the North West Study Manual also emphasised the need to consider the physical characteristic of the land when determining these boundaries.

Using these designations, the research analysed the *ucs* to see how these different ways of determining the total-urban-area influenced the conceptualisation of *uc* in the *ucs* themselves, and as with the method-type analysis, presented these findings with examples taken from the *ucs* in chapter 8.

As already discussed (section 5.2.2), the *ucs* came from a range of government levels, and served different functions. This had particular impact on this *ucs* assessment-content category (the total-urban-area), due to the difference in area covered by the authority, and of their understanding of their remit to complete an *ucs*. This is discussed further in chapter 8.

5.7.3 This Research's Analysis of the Development-Opportunities

Here, as with the method-types and applied-methods (see section 5.6.3) the research needed to make a distinction between the **development-opportunity categories** as they were described by *TtP* (p.10-16) and extended by this research, and the **development-opportunities** as they were applied by the *ucs*. These development-opportunity categories are the categories of development-opportunities that the *ucs* could have chosen to consider; and the development-opportunities are the development-opportunities the *ucs* actually referred to, and did include in their considerations.

Here, in response to the questions posed in section 5.1, this research looked at the development-opportunities included in the *ucs*. The analysis focused on:

- Which development-opportunities were and were not included in the *ucs*, and how these fitted the government advice (see section 8.3);
- Which development-opportunities were and were not included in the *ucs* and how these changed over the surveyed period (1994-2002) (see section 8.3);
- The inclusion of the various development-opportunities, reflecting particularly on:
 - the underlying premise for their inclusion and how this related to the premises of this research's concept models;
 - the way these development-opportunities were treated in the *ucs* and how this influenced their orientation in relation to the concept models (see section 8.3).

The initial assumption here was that where the development-opportunities were wide-ranging, i.e. many different development-opportunity categories were included, the *ucs* reflected a more explorative character, suggesting this research's Opportunity Model; and where the choice of development-opportunities was narrow, i.e. only looked at a few development-opportunity categories, the *ucs* was more constraining (the Constrained Model).

An exception was that some *ucs* expressed an intention to limit themselves to a particular type of development-opportunity to explore the possibilities of that particular development-opportunity more thoroughly,⁸⁰ e.g. some partial studies.⁸¹ For example, the London SRQ Study looked at how the intensification of development in certain urban-areas could result in higher density high quality locations. Effectively, it expressed the yield of these limited numbers of development-opportunities as plentiful, and characterised planning policy as overly restrictive. This characterisation accords better with the Opportunity Model, even if the choice of development-opportunity categories was limited.

Defining the Development-Opportunities

The definition of development-opportunities themselves was difficult because different *ucs* had treated the same development-opportunities differently.⁸² It was also difficult because some development-opportunities were ignored by some *ucs* altogether, whilst other *ucs* considered them but then rejected them, and still other *ucs* considered them as possibilities and kept them in their considerations.⁸³

A further problem was that the *ucs* defined the development-opportunities so differently. Here, some *ucs* concentrated on use,⁸⁴ residential use, employment use, previous use; some concentrated on site size, and on the character of the opportunity e.g. large sites, small sites and conversions;⁸⁵ and some *ucs* concentrated on the condition of the site: vacant,

⁸⁰ However, not all partial studies aimed to explore particular development-opportunities in an innovative or exploratory way. Many reflected on their limited development-opportunities in limiting ways (see chapter 8).

⁸¹ See section 5.2.2 for a fuller explanation of partial studies.

⁸² E.g. the West Sussex Study (p.12) divided windfall sites into many different types of development-opportunity, but did not look at these development-opportunities beyond their consideration as windfall, whilst in other *ucs*, windfall was considered as a development-opportunity alongside other development-opportunities, e.g. North East Arup Study (p.10-12).

⁸³ E.g. open spaces are not mentioned in London 2000 Study or London 1994 Study, they are considered but rejected on policy grounds in the North East Arup Study, are considered in the Wolverhampton Study through designs, and the South West Study considers them as a number of typical-urban-area types (see chapter 6 for full method-type descriptions).

⁸⁴ E.g. Yorkshire and Humber Study (Appendix 1); South West Study (Appendix 2).

⁸⁵ London 1994 Study and London 2000 Study chapter 4 reflects on 'large sites and conversions' and chapter 5 reflects on 'small sites and conversions.'

contaminated,⁸⁶ or in terms of other characteristics: brownfield, greenfield.⁸⁷ This made comparisons across the development-opportunities difficult, due to the obvious incompatibility of these characterisations with each other. Moreover, where they appeared compatible, this often proved false, as the *ucs* made very different definitional distinctions within the same categories.⁸⁸

This Research's Development-Opportunity Categories

To overcome this difficulty this research has again used *TtP* as a key document,⁸⁹ taking, and where necessary adapting, its development-opportunity categories, accepting its definitions as the definitions for the described development-opportunities.

Therefore the development-opportunities included in this analysis, and described by *TtP* (p.10-16) were:

- Subdivision of existing housing

This research's term: **residential-subdivision**

The subdivision of existing housing into two or more units (*TtP* p.11)

- Flats over shops

This research's preferred term was Living Over the Shop (**LOTS**) taken from Petherick and Fraser (1992).

The potential to convert space over shops (and local offices etc.) to flats whatever the size of the settlement, including villages. (*TtP* p.11)

- Empty homes

This research's term: **empty-homes**

The number of empty homes that can be brought back into use (*TtP* p.12)

- Previously developed vacant and derelict land and buildings (non housing)

This research's term: **previously-developed-land-and-buildings**

⁸⁶ E.g. Yorkshire and Humber Study has 3 typical-urban-area types for vacant land of which one is for derelict land (V32) (see Appendix 1).

⁸⁷ E.g. in the Stoke Study Stages 2 and 3 'assesses the potential' of 'brownfield sources' and Stage 6 'assesses the greenfield potential.'

⁸⁸ E.g. previously-developed-land includes contaminated land in some instances and not in others; in some instances it includes car-parks and in others this is a separate category.

⁸⁹ It took *TtP* as the key document for the same reasons as it did for the method-types (discussed in section 5.3.5).

a large variety of sites...some sites might have temporary uses on them such as car parking. Essentially (these sites) are the sites usually identified (perceived to be) as 'brownfield'. (*TtP* p.12)

TtP (p.13) noted that this development opportunity category was subdivided by some studies into

- Large sites; typically defined as >0.4 ha (but can vary)
- Small sites: no clear definition but presumably sites ≤0.4 ha
- Intensification of existing areas

This research's term: **intensification**

In broad terms intensification is making more effective use of land in a given area, for example by developing garage courts, large gardens and backlands. (*TtP* p.13)

- Redevelopment of existing housing

This research's term: **redevelopment-of-existing-housing**

Redevelopment is defined by *TtP* as being

the knocking down [of] what is currently there with the aim of replacing it with a better designed, better laid out and better quality development. (*TtP* p.14)

It anticipates this might be an option where there is 'poor quality housing'.

- Development of car parks

This research's term: **redevelopment-of-car-parks**

surface car parks and in particular temporary car parks.⁹⁰ (*TtP* p.14)

TtP also suggested that the consideration of 'well used car parks' should be included.

- Conversion of commercial buildings

This research's term: **commercial-conversions**

non-residential conversions to housing includes conversions of offices, commercial and industrial buildings. (*TtP* p.14)

⁹⁰ Avoiding double counting those [that] have been considered as part of the vacant and derelict land category- footnoted in *TtP* as well.

- Review of existing housing allocations in plans

This research's term: **review-of-existing-housing-allocations**

Revisit existing housing allocations using more up to date approaches. It may be possible to develop these sites more intensively, through applying better design and sensitive layouts, with the overall result being a better mix of size and type of development. (*TtP* p.15)

- Review of other existing allocations in plans

This research's term: **review-of-other-existing-allocations**

Allocations of land for employment and other uses which are not likely to be taken up in the quantities envisaged (*TtP* p.15)

or

where the designation is no longer compatible with policy set out in recent *PPGs*. (*TtP* p.15)

- Vacant land not previously developed

This research's term: **vacant-land-not-previously-developed**

This is land which is often shown within built up areas on Ordnance Survey maps as a white area without annotation. (*TtP* p.16)

Does not include

areas used for agriculture, playing fields, parks, or allotments. (*TtP* p.16)

This raises the point, already alluded to, that there are development-opportunities which are included in the *ucs*, but not included in the *TtP* categories. However, for this research, these other development-opportunities needed to be included and have consequently been added. They are:

- Open space

This research's term: **open-space**

Some *ucs* looked at the development opportunity of open space prior to its omission from the list in *TtP* and *PPG3:2000*'s (par.53) discouragement from using this particular development opportunity (e.g. Wolverhampton Study, South West Study).⁹¹

- Redevelopment of existing uses

⁹¹ The South West Study included open spaces and informal open space as two of its typical-urban-area types (p.16), but assumed they would not change Appendix 5.

This research's term: **redevelopment-of-existing-uses**

The Avon Study (p.11) used this category instead of 'redevelopment-of-existing-housing', This extends the range of opportunities by looking at all redevelopment opportunities, whether they were primarily employment, retail or whatever, where some housing might come about; rather than simply limiting the examination of redevelopment areas to those for housing. Given that the Avon Study had clearly indicated a dissatisfaction with the redevelopment-of-housing development-opportunity category,⁹² it seemed inappropriate for this research to squeeze this development-opportunity found in the Avon Study back into the category definition with which it had expressly disagreed. Therefore, this research included redevelopment-of-existing-uses as a separate category. It should be noted that redevelopment of housing use is included within this category.

- Live-work units

This research's term: **live-work units**

The London 2000 Study includes this as a new category (p.49) but fails to describe precisely what it includes within it. The study does note that a number of boroughs have this type of development, but that only seven record it as a separate category, and that others include the category within mixed schemes or small site development. Within the survey set, the category was not found in any other *ucs* except the London 2000 Study.

- Homes in Multiple Occupation

This research's term: **homes-in-multiple-occupation**⁹³

These are considered in Cambridge Study (p.10), London 1994 Study (p.15)⁹⁴ and London 2000 Study (p.62),⁹⁵ and obviously offer an alternative in housing provision not included in the other *TtP* categories; some studies have included hostels, student

⁹² By altering its name and what it included, see Avon Study p.11 and p.14 for examples of other redevelopment opportunities that it looked at.

⁹³ Cambridge Study (p.10) refers to this development-opportunity category as 'Homes-in-Multiple-Occupation', London 1994 Study (p.15) refers to them as House-in-Multiple-Occupation and London 2000 Study (p.62) refers to it as 'Non self-contained accommodation'. This research's term reflects the Cambridge Study's term.

⁹⁴ The London 1994 Study (p.15) noted that there were some discrepancies over how different boroughs identified 'house-in-multiple-occupation' where some identified it as one dwelling and others as many dwellings.

⁹⁵ In London 2000 Study these have been called 'Non self-contained accommodation'.

accommodation and the like as these types of accommodation, e.g. Yorkshire and Humber Study,⁹⁶ South West Study.⁹⁷

In addition to these categories, London 2000 Study (p.65-69) suggested looking at affordable housing. However, this has been excluded from the overall list, as it is more a description of the type of housing being produced, rather than a development-opportunity.

TtP's definition of UC through its Development-Opportunities Selection

In addition to providing this research with the basis of a defined set of development-opportunity categories to use in this research's analysis of the *ucs* development-opportunities, *TtP's* (p.10) set of development-opportunities also provided an aggregated government definition of *uc*, as defined by what it included in terms of its choices of development-opportunities.

Here *TtP* did not suggest that one development-opportunity should have higher priority over another, but instead treats them all as equal. This then suggested that the combined development-opportunities of *uc* can be represented as a pie chart with all the development-opportunities being of equal weight in importance,⁹⁸ and the whole chart representing '*uc*'. This representation of *uc* is shown in *Figure 5.6*. Open space was expressly excluded from the *PPG3:2000* (par. 53) definition, and is consequently recorded as being outside the concept of *uc*.

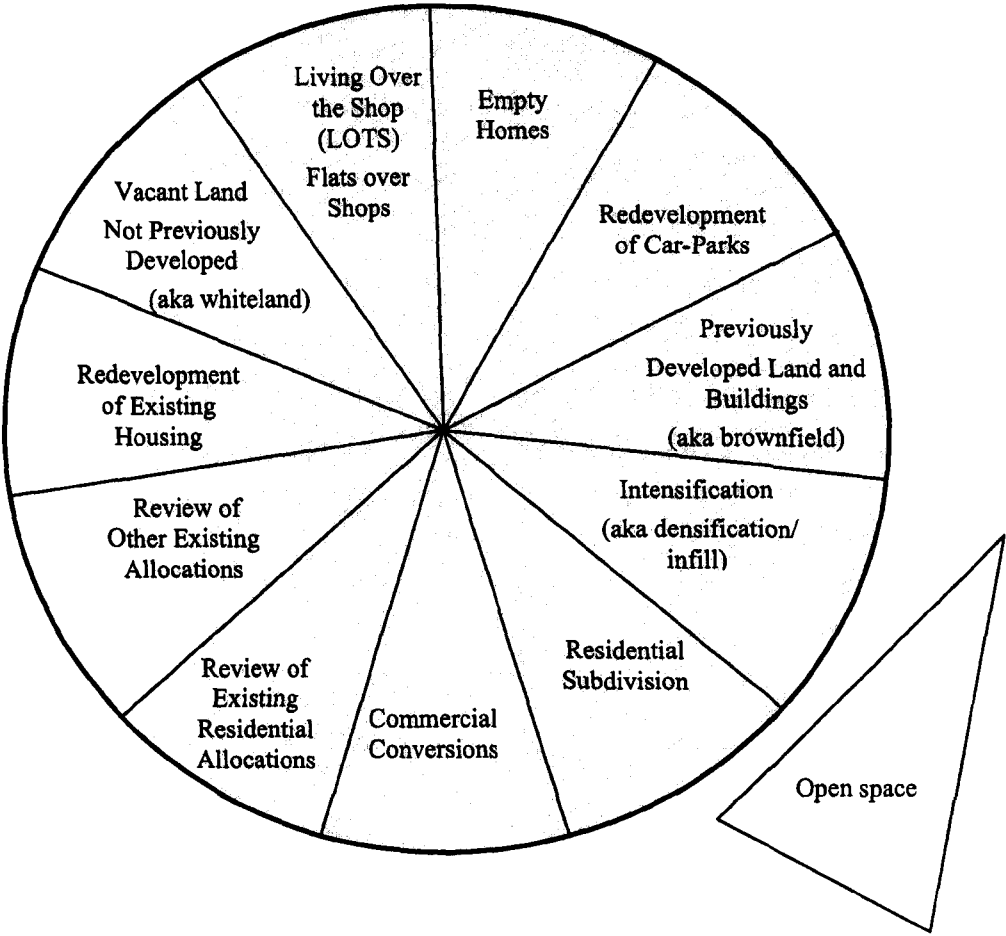
This representation demonstrates graphically what the government means in terms of the development-opportunities to consider when it talks about *uc* and *uc* assessment, and effectively represents the government's position on this part of the *uc* assessment-contents' expression. This has been used in this research firstly to compare the government's position against this research's models to see if the government's representation of *uc* is reflected more by the Opportunity Model. Secondly, it has been used to explore the categories of development opportunity in the *ucs*, and to compare these with the government's position.

⁹⁶ Typical-urban-area type C27 Community: University buildings and halls of residence Appendix 1.

⁹⁷ Typical-urban-area type C27 Community: University buildings and halls of residence Appendix 2.

⁹⁸ This research is not suggesting here that the development-opportunities will yield equal contributions to the overall assessment yield, which is unlikely.

Figure 5.6 TtP's concept of uc – based on the development-opportunities that should be included in ucs (TtP p.10)



5.7.4 This Research’s Analysis Method for the Development-Opportunities’ Analysis

The research analysis for the development-opportunities took two forms. Part of its analysis reflected on the incidence of the various development-opportunity categories’ usage in the *ucs*, and the fit of the *ucs* against *TtP*’s development-opportunity categories (see section 8.3). The other part reflected on the premises for the various development-opportunities’ inclusion, and their treatment within the *ucs*.

The Development-Opportunities Summative Table

The incidence of development-opportunities found in the various *ucs* were tabulated in chronological order (with the latest *ucs* at the top), to enable the development-opportunities to be analysed more easily (see *Figure 8.2*).

This analysis included: firstly, a consideration of the breadth of the *ucs* in terms of the number of development-opportunities they considered, and whether this was wide or narrow relating this to this research's concept-models. Secondly, it included a comparison of this breadth across the various *ucs*. Thirdly, it included a comparative analysis of the breadth of these *ucs* in relation to time expressed through the chronological order. Finally, it considered the implications these findings had on the conceptual evolution of *uc*.

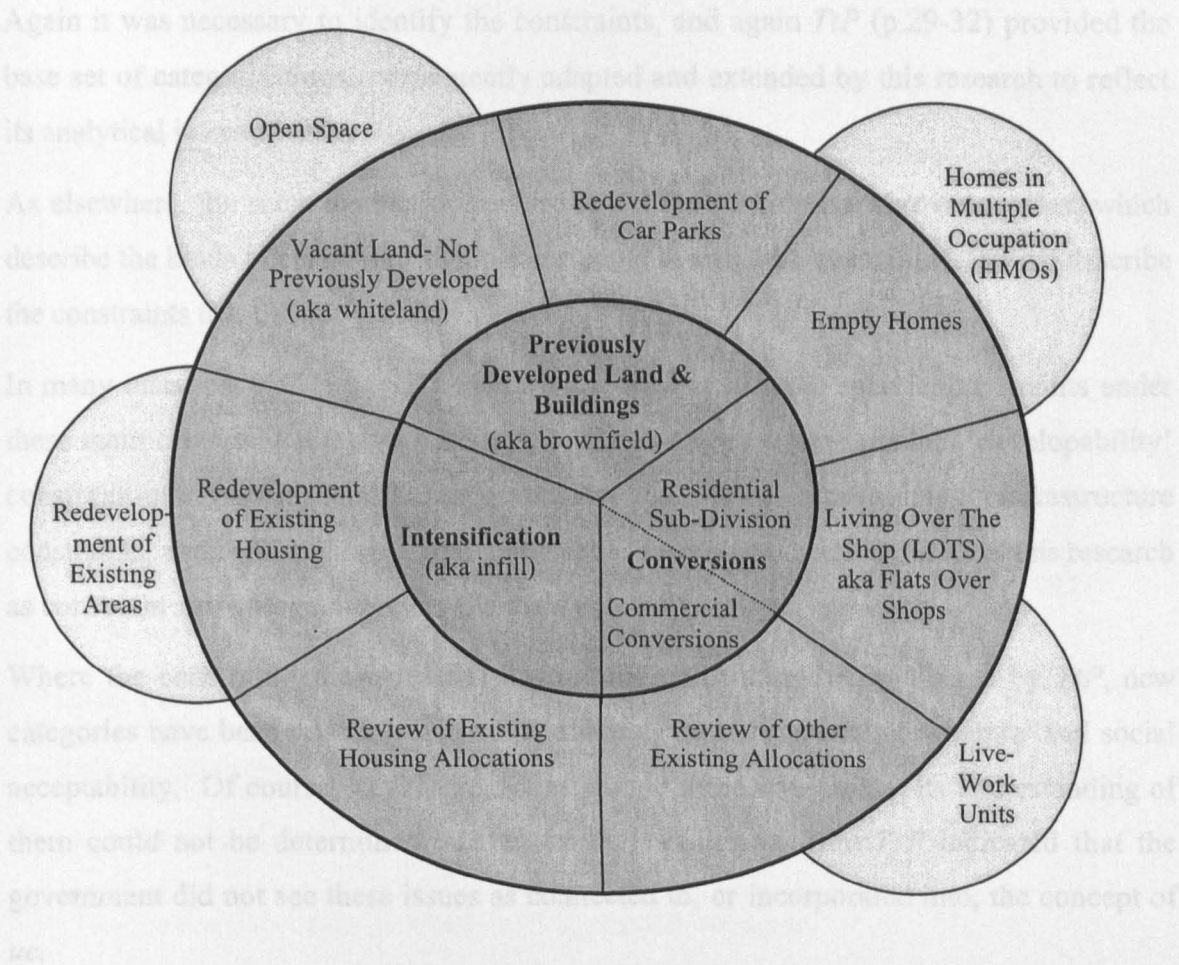
However, as already noted, due to the variety of ways the development-opportunities have been categorised in their respective *ucs*, allocating them to this research's categories has been difficult, and sometimes seemed forced. Where some *ucs* have connected the development-opportunities differently it has been necessary to separate them out. Where this occurred it was noted, and this fit of the *ucs*' categories is discussed at the head of this research's development-opportunity analysis (see section 8.3.1).

This summative table demonstrates well the patterns between the *ucs* over time, and gives a good overview of the development-opportunities that were included, omitted or excluded. (Where the *ucs* stated that the development-opportunity would not be considered this is shown as 'N' in the table). These patterns and what they appear to say about the evolutionary content of *uc* in relation to this research's main question are reflected upon in section 8.3.

The Development-Opportunity Categories Diagram

Additionally, this summative table also provides the basis for developing an alternative representation of the development-opportunity categories, reflecting how much they seemed to be taken up, which eased the analysis of the individual *ucs* and provided a good comparative tool against *TiP*'s conceptual definition, as articulated by the inclusion of certain development-opportunity categories outlined above. This new diagrammatic representation (*Figure 5.7*) accommodates the additional development-opportunities, observed in the *ucs*, and effectively constitutes extensions to the government's understanding of *uc*. This slightly reshapes the conceptual understanding of *uc* as it was depicted by government (represented in *Figure 5.6*). This new representation is described and discussed more fully in chapter 8, closer to the analysis of the development-opportunities derived from it.

Figure 5.7 A representation of the concept of uc – based on the frequency⁹⁹ that the development-opportunities identified in the survey of ucs.



5.7.5 This Research’s Analysis of the Constraint and Policy Considerations

This research then reflected on the *ucs* consideration of the constraints, including planning policy. Here, as elsewhere, the main concern was how the inclusion and exclusion and the characterisation of these constraints related to the evolving concept of *uc*.

As already mentioned, some partial studies, whilst narrow, proved to reflect quite deeply on the development-opportunities and the hindrances that these development-opportunities encountered (see section 5.7.3). Indeed, many of the full *ucs* used some partial studies to help develop their own thinking on particular development-opportunities.

Therefore, here this research analysed the *ucs* primarily in terms of how characterisation of the constraints influenced the way the development-opportunities were considered, and how this interaction reflected the *ucs*’ concept of *uc*, either favouring development (the Opportunity Model) or preventing it (Constrained Model).

⁹⁹ Frequency relates here to the frequency with in the survey set of *ucs*. It does not relate to the frequency of the development-opportunities being mentioned in an individual study, or to the frequency rate in other surveys.

5.7.6 *The Defining of the Constraint Categories*

Again it was necessary to identify the constraints, and again *TtP* (p.29-32) provided the base set of categorisations. subsequently adapted and extended by this research to reflect its analytical interest better.

As elsewhere, the same distinction was made between the **constraint categories**, which describe the kinds of constraints that the *ucs* could use and the **constraints**, which describe the constraints that the *ucs* did use.

In many instances *TtP* (e.g. p.30) identified a number of more specific constraints under these main constraint category headings, so for example, under the main ‘developability’ constraint-category, it identified topographical and physical constraints,¹⁰⁰ infrastructure constraints, and legal and ownership constraints. These have been included in this research as constraint **sub-categories** under the main constraint category heading.

Where the constraint categories fall beyond the constraints being offered by *TtP*, new categories have been added, hence the addition of ‘environmental constraints’ and social acceptability. Of course, as *TtP* did not reflect on these constraints, its understanding of them could not be determined. However their omission from *TtP* indicated that the government did not see these issues as connected to, or incorporated into, the concept of *uc*.

5.7.7 *This Research’s Constraint Categories*

TtP identified four main constraint categories, each of which included a number of sub-categories:

- Developability (*TtP* p.30)

This reflected on the capability of a particular development-opportunity to be developed.

The category included a number of sub-categories, identified by this research as a development-opportunity’s:

- **topography constraints**, i.e. its physical constraints, including: access, floodrisk, ground instability, contamination.

¹⁰⁰ So named by this research, not by *TtP*.

- **infrastructure constraints**, i.e: services to the site: water, sewage, lighting, transport networks, but also schools, health-care facilities.
- **legal and ownership constraints**, i.e: multiple ownership, unwillingness of owners to develop, particular contractual constraints.
- **Market Viability** (*TtP* p.31)

This included a consideration of the development-opportunities' market context, and also appeared to centre on a number of sub-categories:

- **Market conditions**, i.e. the overall market performance.
- **Local market characteristics**, i.e. the performance of the localised market.
- **Development value**, i.e. the profitability of the development, and whether this made it attractive to developers.
- **Local Character** (*TtP* p.31)

This related to the existing conditions in a locality which might prevent development.

Here *TtP* identified :

- **conservation area designations** as a particular constraint.

But a number of *ucs* identified:

- **'bad-neighbour' uses**, i.e. existing development that people would be reluctant to live next to. This was included as a sub-category.
- **Planning Standards** (*TtP* p.32)

This related to the influence that planning standards had on preventing some development-opportunities from being developed.

Here *TtP* referred to:

- **Planning standards**: particular building standards, parking standards
- **Planning designations**, i.e. existing designations already in plans, and sites which already had planning permission.

This research also identified **planning policy**, as some *ucs* reflected on proactive policy to overcome particular constraints,

This research renamed this category **planning-policy** rather than planning standards.

From observations made from this research’s *ucs* survey, this research added:

- Environmental constraints

This highlighted particular environmental concerns: bio-diversity, environmental capital, sustainable principles etc., which *TtP* did not raise as issues, but which a number of *ucs* did.

- Social acceptability.

This highlighted the acceptability of different housing options.

Each of these categories are described and explored more fully in chapter 8.

5.7.8 This Research’s Method of Analysing the Constraints

The research analysis for the constraints reflected upon how *TtP* had discussed the constraints (see section 5.9). then it reviewed the incidences of these constraints in the *ucs* and observed how these constraints were considered and characterised in relation to the concept-models. This analysis focused on the constraint categories summative table (see *Figure 8.7*).

The Constraint Categories Summative Table

As with the development-opportunities, this research produced a chronological table of the *ucs*, this time identifying the constraints that were used. As with the development-opportunity categories summative table, the *ucs*’ constraints did not fit this research’s constraint categories perfectly. Consequently this research discussed the fit of the *ucs* to the categories ahead of the analysis.

However, this research noted the importance of the constraints being treated either as unalterable or as overcomeable and their implications on the development-opportunities. This was indicated on the table by depicting **unalterable** constraints in red, and **changeable** constraints in grey. Some *ucs* accepted some constraints as givens without reflecting on them; these were coloured orange, because whilst this treatment may have been incidental, it was still constraining.

Using this table and the *ucs* themselves, the research explored how the *ucs* treated the various constraints, noting that the individual constraints were often treated differently in different *ucs*. It was also noticed that, often within a single *ucs*, some constraints were treated as unalterable and others as changeable. Furthermore, the research also observed that the understanding of the *ucs* as alterable and unchanging was not the same across the

ucs. Finally, this research also noted that in some instances, certain constraints were not considered at all, and examined this in its analysis of the treatment of the different constraint categories by the *ucs*.

The research also explored *TtP*'s discussion of the various constraint categories, and reflected on the characterisation of the constraints in the light of *TtP*'s discussion and against this research's concept models.

From this analysis, it was possible to consider the way the constraints had been depicted and used, and to relate this back to the questions posed in section 5.7.1, to examine the way that *uc* as a concept has changed, and how this change is expressed through the constraint part of the *ucs* assessment-content.

5.8 Timelines

The *ucs* have been tabulated chronologically in a number of places, both in the analysis of the method-types and of the *ucs* assessment-content. These tables have been identified as 'summative tables' elsewhere. However, because of their ordering they also provide a timeline of *ucs* method-types and content considerations. Consequently, some comparisons can be made across time, in relation to each other, and in relation to the government's thinking and the observed evolution of the argumentation of *uc* (see chapter 4). Here it needed to be remembered that the *ucs* were not randomly selected, and this might temper the results.

This part of the research drew heavily on the analysis that had gone before with regard to the conceptual bias of *uc*, as it appeared in different expressions: its argumentation by government including the evolution this analysis demonstrated; and its expression in the *ucs* through the *ucs* methods and *ucs* assessment-content.

Setting this analysis in the context of these other findings, it was possible to consider how *uc* as expressed in the *ucs* methods and the *ucs* assessment-content reflected the evolution of the concept, whether this was similar to the evolution expressed by the government's argumentation, and the implications of the comparison, in terms of the evolution of the idea and in terms of planning practice.

5.9 The Government Preferences

As indicated throughout this chapter, government's preferences were regularly observed in relation to the various elements being analysed: the various method-types, the *ucs* assessment-content; and have been explored for evidence that the government has a bias for particular methods and particular ways of considering the assessment-content.

To remain in keeping with the way that government argued the concept of *uc* (chapter 4) by 2000, when *TtP* was produced, this should mean that the government advice favours method-types and assessment-content concerns in keeping with the Opportunity Model. If this were the case, then the government's position on *uc* would appear to be consistent; if the opposite were true then it would reveal an inconsistency in government thinking. Either way, it has implications for the way that *uc* was being understood and used in planning practice.

Finally, the *ucs* could be reviewed in the light of the government's preferences, to explore how far they were taking up the government's positions. This could be used to inform this research on how much the government's earlier finding of other authorities' reluctance to take on new methods was proving to be true, and the inferences of this. It could also be used to observe how consistently the evolution of the concept of *uc* has been, and its subsequent implications.

Chapter 6 The *UCS* Survey:

A Description of the *UCS* Method-Types

Chapter 6 The UCS Survey: A Description of the UCS Method-Types

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the overall structure of an *ucs* method: its stages and its method-types; outlines the premises and techniques found within these stages and method-types; and presents the government's critique of these method-types. The analysis of these method-types, including whether the government's preferred method-types have a particular bias towards this research's Constrained Model or Opportunity Model, will be considered in more depth in chapter 7.

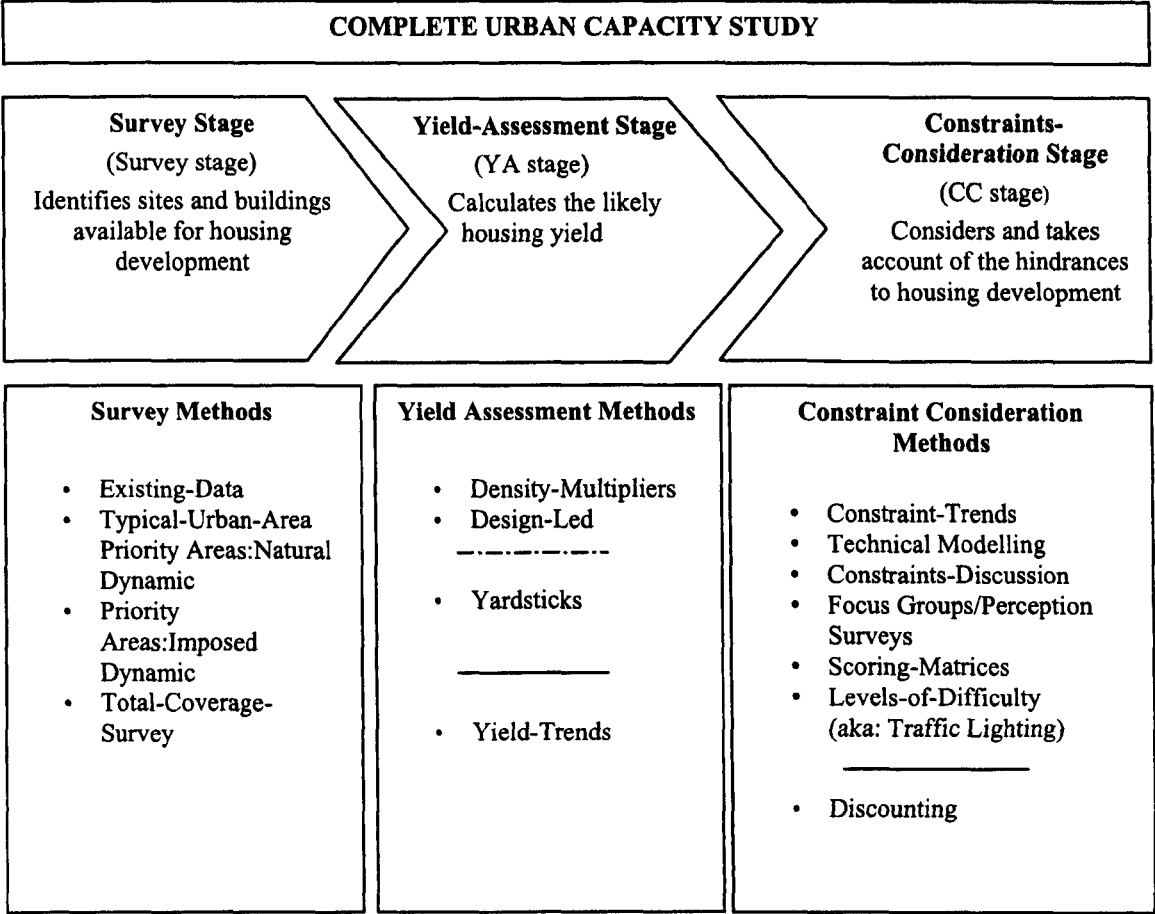
6.2 Stages and Method-Types

Most *ucs* are completed through clearly identified stages. In an *ucs* these stages may vary in their emphasis, but they can be defined by their intended function. The first stage is the Survey stage. This identifies the development-opportunities that are available for housing development. The Yield-Assessment stage is the next stage. This calculates the amount of housing the identified development-opportunities are likely to yield. Finally the Constraints-Consideration stage reflects on the impact that development hindrances are likely to have on this calculated housing yield. This reduces the housing yield estimated from the earlier stages. Each stage builds on the stage before, making it difficult to start the next stage before the former stage has been completed in some way.¹ Therefore a typical *ucs* processes through the stages one after the other, or at least addresses the issues each stage is designed to address, in a sequence not very different from the one presented in *Figure 6.1*.

In contrast, the methods are the techniques that the *ucs* employ at each stage to complete the function of that stage. This research has called these methods **method-types**, because they are both generic and distinctive from each other.

¹ However it should be noted here that many *ucs* have managed to mix stages together, as indicated in *TtP* (p.29), and that this is reflected in the way the *ucs* fit into the method-types discussed in greater detail in section 5.4).

Figure 6.1 Diagram to show the main stages of an ucs and the choices of method-type at each stage



They have also been applied in slightly different ways in different *ucs*, and as mentioned in chapter 5 where this research discussed the way *ucs* have applied the method-types, it has referred to these as the applied-method. There is a choice of method-types at each stage (see Figure 6.1), and more than one method-type can be chosen within a stage, so they are not mutually exclusive.

Given that most complete *ucs* used a number of different method-types across the stages, a distinction has been made between the stage method-types and the method used for the entire *ucs*. This method for the entire *ucs* has been called the aggregated-method-type (see section 5.6.2), and the method-types at each stage have been referred to as stage method-types, e.g. Survey stage method-type; or as named method-types, e.g. Density-Multiplier method-type.

6.3 The Stages

An *ucs* is usually made up of a number of stages: the Survey stage, the Yield-Assessment stage, and the Constraints-Consideration stage.² Each of these stages has a function and is based on a number of different premises relevant to this function and to the understanding of *uc* as an idea. The various stages, their functions and their premises are outlined in *Figure 6.2*, and are discussed in more detail below; however, how a stage is completed is a reflection of the method-type, and how it is applied. Therefore the descriptions of the various method-types at each stage are incidentally descriptions of how the stages might be completed. *Figure 6.2* shows how these stages work together to reach a final assessment of *uc* for a particular locality.

Figure 6.2 Stages' functions and premises

Stages	Function/Premise
Survey stage	To discover and characterise (all) the sites and buildings that are available or that are likely to become available for future housing development.
Yield-Assessment stage	To calculate the likely housing yield of particular land and building sites through a knowledge of the character of the sites, their location and possible policy considerations.
(output from early stages) Theoretical Capacity/ Unconstrained Capacity	Premise for calculation: all opportunities (fully identified in Survey stage and Yield Assessment stage) are fully realised to ascertain the capacity for additional housing which would be available if the options were carried through completely.
Constraints-Consideration stage	There are obstacles to development which are likely to prevent, delay or reduce the housing yield. This needs to be recognised and reflected in the overall assessment.

6.3.1 The Survey Stage

The Survey stage is designed to discover all the available development-opportunities available for housing. These can include sites and buildings, and they can include development-opportunities likely to become available as well as ones which are currently available.

² *TtP* indicated an early 'stage' of deciding firstly the boundaries of the total-urban-area, and secondly what development-opportunities should be considered. This research thought this was more related to the assessment-content than the method-types and analysed it as part of the assessment-content analysis (chapter 8), not the method-type analysis (chapter 7).

There are five possible method-types to choose between at this stage: Existing-Data, Typical-Urban-Areas, Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic, Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic and Total-Coverage-Survey. In practice most *ucs* that used the Priority-Areas method-types³ considered both the naturally dynamic areas, and the areas where policy had been imposed to generate a change in the way the area worked. There were also some overlaps between Survey stage method-types: e.g. the East Midland Study Manual and the Leicestershire/Leicester Study both suggested using a Typical-Urban-Areas method-type for some aspects of the *ucs* and Priority-Areas method-types for others.

This stage determines the parameters of the urban-areas, and the development-opportunities that are investigated.⁴ It also determines the urban-areas and development-opportunities, defining character distinctions. These character distinctions control the way the urban-areas and development-opportunities are treated in other parts of the *ucs*. These characterisations vary, partly due to the different method-types' formatting of data pertaining to the urban-areas and development-opportunities, which is dependent on the technique and premise of the different method-types.

6.3.2 The Yield-Assessment Stage

Once the defined urban-area's development-opportunities⁵ have been identified, the Yield-Assessment stage calculates the housing yield of these different development-opportunities. The Yield-Assessment stage calculates this on the basis of the information provided at the Survey stage, reflecting the characterisation of firstly the urban-areas, secondly the development-opportunities and possibly thirdly relevant policy considerations. The Yield-Assessment stage sometimes includes constraint concerns.⁶ However *TtP* (p.23) suggests that these concerns should be reserved for the Constraints-Consideration stage.

TtP presented three method-type options at the Yield-Assessment stage; two calculate the housing yield of sites without buildings: the Density-Multipliers method-type, and the Design-Led method-type; and the third method-type option -the Yardsticks method-types- calculates the housing yield from buildings (Yardsticks). These yardstick calculations are specific to particular development-opportunity categories,⁷ but vary to the degree they

³ East Midland Study Manual, North West Study Manual.

⁴ Discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

⁵ Chapter 8 looks at these elements more fully under a discussion on the assessment-content of *ucs*.

⁶ See Cambridge Study, North East Arup Study, West Sussex Study.

⁷ I.e. different yardsticks are used for LOTS from those used for warehouse conversions or residential-subdivision. For this reason, this research refers to Yardsticks method-types (plural).

incorporate constraints into their formulae (see section 6.5.3). Consequently, some overlap into the next stage whilst others remain distinct. This research also identified some *ucs* usage of trend projections to calculate housing yields of either sites or buildings at this stage. This method-type has been included in this research as the Yield-Trends method-type.

Three of these method-types rely heavily on numeric formulae to do the calculations: the Yield-Trends, Density-Multipliers and the Yardsticks method-types. The other, the Design-Led method-type, uses 'design templates'⁸ to evaluate different sites' housing yield.

Consequently, *TtP* (p.23-26) indicates that this stage's choice of method-types is between the Density-Multipliers method-type, generating statistical yields, or the Design-Led method-type generating more site-specific yields. In contrast, only one method-type option is offered for buildings -the Yardsticks method-types- although here there may be a choice of formulae (see *TtP* p.27-28). These method-types will mathematically generate the yield for different building categories. However this research offers another method-type for buildings: the Yield-Trends method-type, which extends the method-type choices at this stage to deciding between Yardsticks and Yield-Trends method-types for buildings. These choices may be influenced by the data gathered, its formatting and its characterisation at the Survey stage. Here the likelihood is that the Yield-Assessment stage method-types and their application will reiterate the characterisation of the development-opportunities and urban-areas imposed at the Survey stage.

TtP says of this stage:

...Urban housing capacity studies should be more than just a mechanical process of identifying more land and buildings for housing. They must also explore the potential to develop these opportunities most efficiently. This goes beyond a simple identification of sites and involves an appraisal of their potential (possibly with several different options being considered). Basing capacity on estimates on development standards in existing plans misses this opportunity. It is important to apply the expectations on densities, parking and layout set out in *PPG3*[:2000].

TtP (2000), p.23

TtP expects these considerations to be reflected in the method-types the *ucs* adopt.⁹

⁸ The term used by *TtP* (p.25).

⁹ See section 6.5 for the Yield-Assessment stage method-types descriptions, section 7.3 in chapter 7 for analysis of the stage's inherent orientation towards this research's Opportunity Model of the *uc* concept and sections 7.4-7.6 in chapter 7 for the analysis of this stage's methods' orientations towards these models.

6.3.3 Theoretical Capacity / Unconstrained Capacity / Unconstrained Potential

The theoretical capacity (*Housing and Urban Capacity* p.L-D 13), also known as the unconstrained capacity¹⁰ (*TtP* p.29), is not a stage. Instead, it is the result of the first two stages. This unconstrained capacity¹¹ is the maximum amount of housing yield that can be achieved if all the development-opportunities are developed to their optimum level. By definition, unconstrained capacity should not include development constraints that reduce its yield, nor should it contain constraints imposed by the method-types used to find it, as this would result in it not being truly unconstrained (see *TtP* p.29).¹²

6.3.4 The Constraints-Consideration Stage

The Constraints-Consideration stage reflects upon the difficulties development encounters, preventing some development-opportunities from being realised. This stage accepts that development occurs imperfectly, hindered by market forces, development preferences, land constraints, and environmental and social acceptability of development.¹³

TtP chose here to discuss a single method-type: Discounting (see *TtP* p.29-33), rather than to present other method-type options.¹⁴ This did not represent the method-types being used in the *ucs* adequately enough, so this research has derived a further six method-types¹⁵ for this stage to reflect the method-types being used.¹⁶

¹⁰ The Stoke Study refers to it as the 'notional capacity' (p.7).

¹¹ This research's preferred term in accordance with *TtP* (p.29).

¹² A fuller discussion of unconstrained capacity as it is depicted in different *ucs* can be found in section 7.3.

¹³ *TtP* suggests developability: This includes ownership, infrastructure and site specific physical constraints; market-viability, local character, and planning standards as potential development constraints. This research found some *ucs* considered environmental impact and social acceptability as constraints hindering development.

¹⁴ In this respect it breaks from the way it has provided guidance at the other stages of an *ucs* method.

¹⁵ As these method-types are not included in *TtP*, it does not critique them. Therefore, this research has used *TtP*'s comments made about the method-types it does critique, and other government comments taken from elsewhere -notably *Housing and Urban Capacity*- to gain a sense of the likely comments government would make about them. This aspect of the research is considered in more detail in section 6.6.

¹⁶ I.e. this research presents a possible choice of 7 different method-types at this stage, taking the 6 derived from the survey and the one presented by *TtP*.

These were derived from this research's survey of *ucs*.¹⁷ These method-types included:

Constraints-Trends method-type:¹⁸ this reflects the use of trend projections but is limited to the constraint considerations rather than the yield.

Constraints-Discussion method-type:¹⁹ this outlines the problems, sometimes the solutions, and the anticipated impact these will have on the development-opportunities' ability to deliver their full housing yield.

Technical-Modelling method-type: here technical models such as computer simulations were used to determine the impact of particular constraints on the eventual housing yield.²⁰

Focus-Groups/Perception-Surveys method-type:²¹ this method-type focuses on gaining the opinion of local communities or particular stakeholder groups, to determine the likely hindrances on the development-opportunities.

Scoring-Matrices method-type:²² this method-type uses a scoring system linked to a set of matrices, to ascertain the significance of different constraints on the various development-opportunities and the ability of the market to overcome them.

Levels-of-Difficulty method-type: this method-type matrixes development-opportunities' constraints -including policy assumptions- against market scenarios, to reflect the impact of the constraints on the development-opportunities.

Often within an *ucs* different method-types have been used to reflect on different constraints, and the constraints have been reflected upon differently.²³ However, as in the earlier stages, some of the Constraints-Consideration method-types are more statistical than others, and this too has implications on how the constraints can be characterised, and how they are interpreted in terms of their constraining influence on the development-opportunities.

¹⁷ It is possible, given that the survey is at best only a sample of the activity currently being carried out in planning departments across the country, that a method has been missed, which would warrant its own particular method-type, and therefore this method-type set should not be taken as exhaustive.

¹⁸ This method-type can be found in the Cambridge Study (p.15).

¹⁹ This method-type can be found in the North East Arup Study.

²⁰ This method-type can be found in the Leicestershire/Leicester Study (Appendix 1), where it uses a CALTRANS model to ascertain the impact of the housing yield on the transport system.

²¹ This method-type is used in the Hertfordshire Study (p.8).

²² This method-type is used in the North West Study Manual (Step 7 p.86-102), and the Halton Study (Appendix D).

²³ This has particular implications for the next stage of this research analysis where the aggregated effect of the methods are considered, but here the most important consideration is the description of the methods identified, and how the government appears to reflect upon them.

6.4 The Survey Stage Method-Types

6.4.1 Existing-Data Method-Type

Figure 6.3 Existing-Data Method-Type's premise

SURVEY STAGE METHOD-TYPES		
Method Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Existing-Data	Existing information is adequate. All possible development-opportunities are known about. Changes in housing provision thinking do not materially alter data-sets and/or their uses.	Uc is constrained by the limits of information gathered to explore issues other than 'uc'.

The Existing-Data method-type gathers together already available pre-existing data. This data may have been collected either as part of another type of study,²⁴ or as part of the authority's own monitoring regime,²⁵ or as part of a much larger data collection endeavour.²⁶ *TiP* notes that many of these data sets are 'reliable', 'relevant' and 'helpful' (p.18). However, it highlights a number of concerns about the use of pre-existing data sets, particularly those based on trends. The issues that are cited are that existing data sets:

- Measure historic performance of the market rather than its future potential
- Are likely to have inconsistencies in the data collection process (particularly if the information is gathered across authorities)²⁷
- Are likely to have unstated value judgements on available capacity hidden within them.

TiP (2000), p.18

These cautions reveal *TiP*'s real concern that this particular method-type prevents the discovery of new development-opportunities, and when discovered prevents them from being fully explored.

²⁴ E.g. North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study (p.4) uses the Nathaniel Lichfield Brownfield Survey and the North East Arup Study.

²⁵ E.g. Cambridge Study's (p.9-11) use of planning permission data.

²⁶ E.g. census data -West Sussex Study for Typical-Urban-Areas method-type; National Land Use Database (NLUD)- North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study (p.4).

²⁷ E.g. the North East Arup Study for the North East Regional Assembly used data from the different authorities of the North East and found that there were gaps in some of the data available, and problems with different ways of recording the same data (see p.13 for example).

6.4.2 Typical-Urban-Areas Method-Type

Figure 6.4 Typical-Urban-Areas Method-Type’s premise

SURVEY STAGE METHOD-TYPES		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Typical-Urban-Areas	Similar areas have similar housing potential and respond to changes in the same way.	Uc limited to an investigation of ‘similar’ areas usually characterised by physical characteristics. Excludes the investigation of too many ‘complicated areas’- These need special categories. Limits an exploration of policy changes.

The Typical-Urban-Areas method-type has the underlying premise that similar areas are likely to have similar development-opportunities. Therefore, if the development-opportunities of a typical sample area can be surveyed and calculated, then it can be multiplied up to give the housing yield of the whole area of that particular type.

Although the Typical-Urban-Areas method-type refers to the way the development-opportunities are identified and characterised at the Survey stage, this method-type needs to be understood in the context of the aggregated-method-type. The Typical-Urban-Areas method-type starts by identifying areas that are deemed ‘typical’ or characteristically alike primarily using land use and building type characteristics.²⁸ A fairly standard example of a Typical-Urban-Areas category used in *ucs* is ‘19th century terraced housing’²⁹ Once the Typical-Urban-Areas category is classified, a sample area of the category is surveyed for development-opportunities.³⁰ The potential for housing development of that type of area is then ascertained, using the Yield-Assessment method-type decided upon.

Once the yield for the sample area is established, it is multiplied appropriately to reflect the likely yield of the total area of that particular Typical-Urban-Area category within the whole *ucs* area. The process is repeated for all the Typical-Urban-Area categories identified. The constraints to development are considered in relation to the Typical-Urban-Area categories, as some of the difficulties are category specific. However, the constraints

²⁸ Some *ucs* used some more socio-economic characteristics as well, e.g. East Midland Study Manual Annex C key characteristics list p.1, Case Study Area Profile form p.8-10, included, for example, social characteristics of the area (2.4.19-2.4.28).

²⁹ See for example West Sussex Study (Table 1.3.3): primarily pre-1914 small terrace and large terrace (2 Typical-Urban-Areas); Hertfordshire Study (p.13): Victorian/Edwardian terraced housing; and Yorkshire and Humber Study (Appendix 1 typical-urban-area R1: small terrace (pre-1914 associated with mills, mining areas, town centres etc.; relatively high density, varies with length of garden) and in South West Study (Appendix 2): the same typical-urban-area types.

³⁰ The Survey stage of the completed *ucs*.

should be considered as a separate stage,³¹ rather than being incorporated into the Yield-Assessment and Survey stages. Finally, once the constraints have been accounted for, the yields of the various Typical-Urban-Area categories are all aggregated together to give a total yield for the total-urban-area being considered. Therefore, the Typical-Urban-Areas method-type concentrates on particular sample areas characterised as typical on the grounds of the physical and use characteristics, and extrapolates the *ucs* findings for each of these sample areas to other areas identified as being sufficiently similar to the sample areas. The other areas are not surveyed.

TtP cited some concerns with the method.³² These are:

- The method's crudity- the method is seen to be 'a blunt analytical tool' (*TtP* p.21) which only gains precision through a massive increase in workload. This additional workload may not be reflected in an equivalent increase in accuracy (*TtP* p.22)
- The method assumes that areas are sufficiently similar in their characteristics that data can be transposed from one area to another (*TtP* p.22), and that estimated figures for sample areas of a particular category can be totalled up to reflect the yield of the whole area of that category
- The method encourages the exploration of *uc* where it is least likely to be found- the homogeneous areas rather than the transitional zones between the Typical-Urban-Areas³³ (*TtP* p.22)

TtP (2000), p.21-22

6.4.3 *Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic*³⁴ *Method-Type*

Figure 6.5 *Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic Method-Type's premise*

SURVEY STAGE METHOD-TYPES		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Priority-Areas: Natural-Dynamic	Development-opportunities are uneven across urban-areas due to the nature of the locality, market, site etc. (e.g. 'shatterzones,' 'interface zones,' 'transitional zones'). These are particularly fruitful in providing additional housing possibilities.	<i>Uc</i> extended by the method-type's anticipation that the natural dynamic of some areas produce exploitable development-opportunities. The understanding/calculation of <i>uc</i> is limited to these dynamic areas as the method ignores other less 'dynamic areas'.

³¹ According to *TtP* (p.29).

³² These will be reflected upon more fully in this research's chapter 7.

³³ Here *TtP* cited work (p.22) carried out by Llewelyn-Davies (the London SRQ Study) to validate the position that the majority of *uc* is likely to be found in transitional zones.

³⁴ The difference between *Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic* and *Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic* is discussed in chapter 5. This subdivision creates two method-types where previously there was one (*TtP* p.20-21). The reflections on the method-type to be found in *TtP* appropriate to the *Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic* element of the *Priority-Areas* method will be explored here. The critique of the *Priority-Areas* method which raises issues reflected in the *Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic* will be explored in section 6.4.4.

The premise of the Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic method-type is that development within towns and cities is naturally uneven, due to differing localities' differing characteristics³⁵ and to the way that areas relate to each other. Consequently, different locations' abilities to maximise development-opportunities varies, enhancing some opportunities and hindering others. Given this, the method-type concentrates on those areas where development-opportunities are thought to be naturally enhanced, as these are the areas where most yield will be achieved.

These areas are referred to in a number of different ways. Urbed's term to describe these urban-areas was 'shatterzones' (see Rudlin:1998 p.26), whilst Llewelyn-Davies used the term 'interface zones' in Llewelyn-Davies' London SRQ Study (p.29) and *TtP* (p.20) adopted the term 'transitional zones.' All describe the urban-areas where one homogenous area merges into another especially around town centres, effectively reducing the homogeneity of each and causing changes in building uses, and building stocks.

TtP's adopted terminology and its impression of the areas themselves (p.20) was based on Llewelyn-Davies' work that states that what they termed 'transitional areas':³⁶

are the areas where you are most likely to find developable sites

North West Study Manual (1998), p.28 par. 4.2.3

These areas may occur

- around the edges of consolidated town city and secondary centres
- along main through routes which are lined with retail development
- where two consolidated areas meet, particularly housing and employment areas
- as mixed use areas within consolidated housing areas

North West Study Manual (1998), p.29 par. 4.2.8

These areas are changing due to their own local character and dynamic, not because of the dynamics of policy change.

³⁵ How it is perceived by people living in and around the area.

³⁶ Llewelyn-Davies used the term 'transition zones' (North West Study Manual, p.28, also known as 'interface zones': Llewelyn-Davies SRQ Study p.29) and interface zones or mixed use zones (Llewelyn-Davies' North West Study Manual p.28). Many other *ucs* look at mixed use as a category even if they do not consider them as being distinctive in the way that Llewelyn-Davies suggests, e.g. Yorkshire and Humber Study has 5 Mixed-Use categories of typical-urban-area (Appendix 1- no page number) South West Study (Appendix 2 table A2.1 no page number), and some noted the mixed use as a characteristic of particular typical-urban-areas e.g. West Sussex Study Table 1.3.3.).

Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic anticipates that the whole urban area will not be explored, concentrating its surveying to areas where most development-opportunities are thought most likely to occur naturally. This Survey method-type may rely on desk-top surveying, but usually includes site visits to determine the area's 'dynamic', and the characteristics and situation of identified sites. Consequently, a relatively small part of the whole urban area is assessed very intensively, in the belief that most development-opportunities are located in these zones. Usually the sites are located on a map indicating the nature of the zone in which they fall, and a proforma is often used to record information about the site, its surrounding area and other significant details observed on site. Therefore, although the amount of the urban area investigated is only a part of the whole of the urban area, the opportunities within the area are fully surveyed.

When compared with the Typical-Urban-Areas method-type, both only consider a part of the total-urban-area, but the Typical-Urban-Areas method-type focuses on the homogenous areas where development opportunities are least likely to occur, whilst the Priority-Areas:Natural Dynamic method-type focuses on the heterogeneous and dynamic areas where development-opportunities are more likely to occur.

Of this survey method-type *TtP* notes that:

the transitional areas between major land use zones are worth considering particularly (as they) have tended to be where significant capacity has been found

TtP (2000), p.20

but that:

In selecting areas to focus survey effort, the obvious opportunities must not be forgotten

TtP (2000), p.21

This suggests that the method-type has the potential to limit the exploration of all development-opportunities, through simply ignoring whole areas that would contribute a little to the overall housing yield, on the grounds that the contribution is not likely to be significant. However it also suggests that in the view of *TtP* this tendency is not necessarily inevitable.

6.4.4 Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic Method-Type³⁷

Figure 6.6 Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic Method-Type's premise

SURVEY STAGE METHOD-TYPES		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Priority-Areas/ Imposed-Dynamic	Development-opportunities are uneven across urban-areas due to the localities nature. Policy can imposes changes to maximise these development-opportunities (e.g. regeneration areas, transport nodes and corridors).	Uc is extended by the method-type's anticipation that some area's natural dynamic will produce exploitable development-opportunities. These can be further exploited through policies that maximise development-opportunities and improve the area. Centres on particular dynamic areas or policy interests.

The premise of the Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic is similar to the previous method-type's (Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic) premise in that it acknowledges the uneven rate of development in urban areas. It also anticipates that this unevenness is likely to create disparities in development-opportunities that might otherwise appear to be similar. However, this method-type goes further, with its presumption that policy can, and perhaps should, be imposed upon particular locations to generate more housing development-opportunities. This change of policy environment for these chosen areas is taken as a characteristic of these locations.

This policy prioritisation can take many forms. It can prioritise the areas where development is desirable for regeneration reasons.³⁸ It can prioritise policies thought to engender particular sustainable principles,³⁹ or it can prioritise policies that attempt to change people's use of urban space, e.g. through changes in travel behaviour.⁴⁰ This

³⁷ The distinction between Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic and Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic has already been outlined (chapter 5). Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic has been discussed above (section 6.4.3). Therefore it has been assumed that the distinction has been made.

³⁸ E.g. East Midlands Study Manual prioritised regeneration strategies by concentrating on areas where they wanted regeneration to occur. It sets out five different regeneration approaches appropriate for different urban-areas and development-opportunities and suggests that the most appropriate be applied to a particular location or development-opportunity.

³⁹ E.g. the Wolverhampton Study prioritised policy related to the formulation of a set of sustainable principles and then applied these to the sites available across the city. These principles encouraged them to consider the functionality of green spaces and encouraged some (albeit limited) development of such areas, usually considered sacrosanct. (TiP fails to list green space as a possible development-opportunity figure 1 p.10 suggesting that this is the one development-opportunity that should not be considered in an ucs).

⁴⁰ In the London SRQ Study (p.26) Llewelyn-Davies looks at the possibility of encouraging walking and increasing the use of public transport through the intensification of development around public transport nodes and in urban centres. It calls these locations 'ped-sheds' and suggests a number of policy changes such as reduced parking and increased housing densities within these prioritised areas as well as considering more radical options such as car-free housing.

demonstrates that the predominant underlying policy regime adopted in an *ucs* is itself a choice.

The method-type importantly includes an early policy priority decision, and how this is going to be applied. These choices influence the subsequent setting of priority-area boundaries⁴¹ and the search for appropriate development-opportunities.⁴² They also influence the characterisation of these priority-areas and development-opportunities, and the type of policy likely to maximise the yield these development-opportunities offer.⁴³ As with Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic, the chosen priority-areas are explored through desk-top analysis, and usually through site surveys. The development-opportunities are usually mapped and their characteristics including site, area, possibilities, and constraints are recorded. The policy regime is likely to be emphasised with regard to its influence on the specific development-opportunities, including some reflection on how changes in policy might alter the development-opportunities' ability to deliver their estimated yields.

TtP (p.20) noted that Priority-Areas method-types are similar to full surveys⁴⁴ but are more selective about their detailed coverage, and reiterates the importance of not forgetting the obvious development-opportunities. It also noted that 'highly accessible locations' (as well as transitional zones) are particularly worth considering. It highlighted Llewelyn-Davies' London SRQ Study as good practice (*TtP* p.20) and draws attention to Llewelyn-Davies' '*ped-sheds*', characterising the areas as locations where additional housing could be built at higher densities with reduced car parking. Therefore the policy shift, as part of the method-type, has been absorbed into the characteristics of the prioritised area at this Survey stage.

⁴¹ E.g. the '*ped-sheds*' devised by Llewelyn-Davies are defined as 'the areas within 10 minute walking distance of a town centre which offers a range of amenities services and employment opportunities as well as access to public transport'. London SRQ Study par. 4.1.1 (p.25).

⁴² E.g. the sustainable principles meant that green space as a category was not excluded from consideration by the Wolverhampton Study and the environment enhancement strategy looked at the function of this green space.

⁴³ E.g. East Midlands Study Manual (p.34-35) sets out five different approaches to explore sites and policies on the basis of different regeneration strategies.

⁴⁴ Referred to in this research as total-coverage-survey (see footnote 45).

6.4.5 Total-Coverage-Survey Method-Type

Figure 6.7 Total-Coverage-Survey Method-Type's premise

SURVEY STAGE METHOD-TYPES		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Total Coverage Survey	The development-opportunities are unknown, needing further investigation in the light of addressing the discovery of uc as a particular problem.	Uc is extended through discovering new development-opportunities which can then be exploited through policies that maximise development-opportunities.

The Total-Coverage-Survey method-type⁴⁵ assumes that pre-existing information is limited and therefore other information specifically for the purposes of completing an ucs needs gathering. By definition, a Total-Coverage-Survey's coverage is comprehensive, covering the entirety of the total-urban-area, and all development-opportunities. This method-type also emphasises the need for site-visits to the various development-opportunities,⁴⁶ and to think in terms of specific sites, their characteristics and their possibilities,⁴⁷ rather than extrapolating information from partially gathered and pre-existing data-sets.

As with the other Survey method-types,⁴⁸ the site information was usually recorded in a standardised way⁴⁹ to ensure that information for the later ucs stages had been gathered, and presented in a useable format. The site surveys usually noted local area characteristics, but unlike Typical-Urban-Areas, Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic and Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic method-types, the Total-Coverage-Survey did not necessarily make clear distinctions between one area and another and refrained from initially excluding particular areas from further consideration because of their defining characteristics. Indeed, where an ucs does exclude areas at the Survey stage the method-type stops being a Total-Coverage-Survey.

⁴⁵ *TtP* (p.19) calls this Survey stage method-type 'Comprehensive Survey'. However, this research calls it Total-Coverage-Survey, because it wishes to reserve the word 'comprehensive' for descriptive purposes, rather than limiting its use to a particular method-type.

⁴⁶ Rather than relying on desk-top searches.

⁴⁷ Rather than thinking initially in terms of statistical generalities.

⁴⁸ Typical-Urban-Areas, Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic and Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic method-types.

⁴⁹ Usually using a proforma.

TtP said of this method-type that:

Most authorities will wish to consider comprehensive surveys⁵⁰ of their urban areas

TtP (2000), p.19

Noting that:

...by definition data provided by (an alternative method-type) will not be as robust as that gained from comprehensive surveys⁵¹

TtP (2000), p.19

When considering the use of this method-types' gathered information, both elsewhere in the *ucs* and beyond, in the way the *ucs* will be used to influence housing policy through site designation, 'implementation strategies' (*TtP* p.18), and land release (*TtP* p.19),⁵² *TtP* implied an anticipated bias within the method-type towards an unfixed, open-ended *uc* conceptualisation, with an emphasis on likely development-opportunity, here sought out in the form of sites by the method-type.

6.5 The Yield-Assessment Stage Method-Types

6.5.1 Density-Multipliers Method-Type

Figure 6.8 Density-Multipliers Method-Type's premise

YIELD-ASSESSMENT METHOD-TYPES		
Method-Types	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Density-Multipliers	It is possible to ascertain numeric yields of site/development-opportunities/areas by applying density (n dw/ha).	The housing yield from development-opportunities is presented numerically through formulae. The density-multipliers relate to density standards, emphasising their regulatory rather than innovative properties. The impact of locally sensitive policy and site characteristics minimised. Can link <i>uc</i> considerations to policy through formulae - have to deal with sites uniformly on basis of formula rules.

The Density-Multipliers method-type is probably the quickest way of assessing the yield of development-opportunity of sites. It is not particularly appropriate for assessing the yield gained through building conversions, as it assumes that sites are empty. The density-multiplier is a chosen density of development applied to the sites found at the Survey stage,

⁵⁰ Total-coverage-survey: see footnote 45.

⁵¹ Total-coverage-survey: see footnote 45.

⁵² Referenced as the sequential approach.

e.g. a density of 25 dwellings per hectare (25 dw/ha) is applied to the site area accordingly. In this case a hypothetical site of one hectare would have a yield of 25 dwellings,⁵³ half a hectare 12-13⁵⁴ dwellings, and a site of one and a half hectares 38 dwellings,⁵⁵ and so on. An underlying assumption is that establishing *uc* is first and foremost a numeric concern, which remains relatively unrelated to site characteristics, and primarily linked to policy through density standards.

The Density-Multipliers method-type can be carried out very simply, with densities being chosen, justified, and applied to all sites quickly and easily,⁵⁶ or in a much more complex fashion.⁵⁷ *TiP* made the point that density-multipliers should not just be:

A case of adding up the total areas of potential sites and multiplying it by a density

TiP (2000), p.24

which it cited as being 'crude' (p.23), effectively criticising the way the method-type was applied in the South Tyneside Brownfield Study.

⁵³ 25 dw X 1ha = 25 dw.

⁵⁴ 25 dw X 0.5 ha = 12.5 dw.

⁵⁵ 25 dw X 1.5 ha = 37.5 dw.

⁵⁶ E.g. South Tyneside Brownfield Survey, where density multipliers of 25-30 dw/ha were chosen on the basis of existing densities of development currently occurring on sites and the prospect of a new minimum density being suggested by the government (PPG3:(Draft)), and 40-50 dw/ha chosen on the basis of Barton:1995 (South Tyneside Brownfield Study pages not numbered). These densities were all applied in a blanket fashion to all sites to give 'a rough estimation of the amount of dwellings that might be possible' (quote from South Tyneside planner).

⁵⁷ E.g. North East Arup Study linked the multipliers to policy. This report reflected on a number of key policy considerations (p.5) on the different approaches to density to be found across the region and in other reports (e.g. Llewelyn-Davies:1994 and Barton:1995, cited p.6 and p.12 respectively).

Then it synthesised these considerations into numeric density-multipliers through a matrix (North East Arup Study table 2.2 Density Policy approach p.6 - cited more fully in this research in section 7.5.3 *Figure 7.4*), which sets density zones -characterised as executive housing (effectively a low density zone), rest of district (standard density zone), and central areas, waterfront development, key public transport corridors/nodes (high density zone)- against the type of housing: family housing dwelling units/ha (gross) (low density housing option, and mixed/non-family housing dwelling units/ha (gross) (higher density option).

The *ucs* then considered the size of the site area and, depending on site size, reduced the amount of the area the density multiplier was applied to. This was done to accommodate the need for public space, amenities and services.

The reduction was calculated as a percentage of the total area, for example 10-20ha reduced by 10% (i.e. 10 ha became 9.9 ha: $10 - (10/100)$); <60ha reduced by 40% (i.e. 60ha became 46.36ha: $60 - (40/100 \times 60)$) (p.7). The site location (of existing housing allocations) was further taken into account in terms of its proximity to public transport infrastructure and town centre proximity.

Two density scenarios were devised. The first was on the basis of existing densities taken from the local authorities' own policy documents, effectively a status quo scenario option. The second was based on an average density target of 65 dw/ha for sites in proximity to town centres and public transport links (analogous to the treatment of 'ped-sheds' in Design-Led method-types discussed in this research's section 6.5.2) and 30 dw/ha for the remaining sites. The different scenarios were then applied to the sites accordingly. This resulted in two sets of density figures for the region and sub-regions (outlined in table 2.4 of North East Arup Study on p. 8).

Instead, *TtP* indicated that density-multipliers should relate to the policy context, size, configuration and supporting facilities, and should also consider whether net or gross densities are appropriate. This effectively endorsed the North East Arup Study's use of density-multipliers, as all these factors were considered within their calculations (see footnote 57). *TtP* (p.24) also suggested that gross densities are appropriate for smaller sites but that net densities are necessary where sites are larger and need additional facilities. So the use of density-multipliers should at least include some reference to the site size, moreover to factor this consideration in at this point⁵⁸ is not a constraint of the overall yield, as such facilities are seen as an integral necessity of the whole development scheme. *TtP* cited Urbed's work (1999)⁵⁹ as setting the net density at 45% of the gross density and FoE:1998⁶⁰ as 50% of the gross density. This gives a range and a blanket application. This makes the North East Arup Study's sliding scale from 10-40% of the area depending on site size (see footnote 57) quite a sophisticated tool and very conservative in its constraint.

TtP approved of the level of complexity found in the North East Arup Study. However *TtP* (p.25) cited three limitations with the overall Density-Multipliers method-types. These were:

- That considerable care needs to be taken in the choosing and applying of the density multipliers.
- That density multipliers can draw from estimates created earlier in the study, increasing the level of uncertainty and assumption.⁶¹
- Thirdly *TtP* concludes that density multipliers are a rather 'blunt tool' even when sophisticated approaches have been taken and applied.

⁵⁸ I.e at the point of considering unconstrained yield rather than before the consideration of development constraints.

⁵⁹ Rudlin and Falk (1999).

⁶⁰ Rudlin (1998) in this research's bibliography.

⁶¹ The assumption that *TtP* gives is that if an *ucs* indicates that a certain number of a particular site type comes forward (the first assumption), then density-multipliers are applied (the second assumption), then the resulting figure is based on two assumptions increasing the level of uncertainty.

6.5.2 Design-Led Method-Type

Figure 6.9 Design-Led Method-Type’s premise

YIELD-ASSESSMENT METHOD-TYPES		
Method-Types	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Design-Led	It is possible to ascertain the numeric yield (capacity) of a site by applying different (pre-determined) design options.	Yield is seen as an interplay of site location, site characteristics and policy formation. Encourages the linkage of localised policy and site issues- allows for more extensive exploration of site characteristics and policy considerations. Extends the concept of uc through linking it to policy and of site characteristics.

Perhaps the main aim of *ucs* is to provide a numeric estimation of the housing yield possible in urban-areas. This Yield-Assessment method-type also develops a numeric estimation of the possible housing development-opportunity expressed in terms of number of dwellings. However, unlike the Density-Multipliers method-type, this Yield-Assessment method-type does not use numeric formulations to generate these estimates of *uc*. Instead it relies on designs,⁶² which are applied on a site-by-site basis. Therefore this method-types fundamental tool is a portfolio of site designs rooted in policy considerations and site characteristics. So, development-opportunities (both sites and buildings) are initially characterised diagrammatically or pictorially rather than statistically.

The Design-Led method-type, like the Density-Multipliers method-type primarily determines the yield for sites rather than buildings.⁶³ The Design-Led method-type starts by producing a portfolio of design solutions on different ‘typical sites’ (*TtP* p.25). These solutions reflect the sites’ characteristics, notably its size, shape, and location within the built fabric: infill site, corner site etc. The solutions are also based on particular ‘policy and density scenarios’ (*TtP* p.25). Typically, these scenarios include:

- Scenario 1: an application of the existing policy situation, usually taken from the existing plan and include regulatory parking and density standards⁶⁴

⁶² Hence its name Design-Led method-type suggested in *TtP* (p.25) on the basis of Llewelyn-Davies’ London SRQ Study).

⁶³ Although Llewelyn-Davies looked at some building conversion options using the method-type, see North West Study Manual: conversion of non-residential buildings design exercise 48- design exercise 52 (no page numbers).

⁶⁴ E.g. North West Study Manual par.2.3.7 p.16: Scenario 1, the ‘status quo’ position, envisaged continued use of current policies and implementation processes.

- Scenario 2: an application of changes in the regulatory parking and density standards,⁶⁵ which results in alternative design solutions being produced for the same site at different density levels depending on the policy alterations
- Scenario 3: a more radical policy option⁶⁶

Therefore, for an individual site there may be as many as 3 different design solutions depending on the policy scenarios pursued.

These site design solutions are usually presented in plan form, detailing the site usually to a scale of about 1:2500,⁶⁷ and as an axonometric drawing, to demonstrate how the buildings would look on the site. Sometimes photos of actual sites are included⁶⁸ and policy options are detailed with a breakdown of dwelling type, density of development, and/or number of people housed,⁶⁹ parking provision, and so on for comparative purposes. The portfolio, or manual, of 'design templates' can then be used as best fit options for the sites found at the Survey stage, with the policy scenarios deemed most appropriate being applied to a particular site. This provides an estimate of the possible number of dwellings that can be achieved on all the surveyed sites,⁷⁰ taking into account something of the sites' characteristics and policy flexibility. The design templates also illustrate the possibilities in such a way that professionals and others are in a better position to determine how feasible the increased density measures actually are.

This method-type is entitled 'Design-Led' method-type rather than Design method-type. This emphasis creates an important distinction between this Yield-Assessment method-type and other or other method-types (e.g. Density-Multipliers method-type) supported by

⁶⁵ E.g. North West Study Manual par.2.3.7 p.16: Scenario 2, Local change scenario, allowed for different types of design solution for sites (particularly reduced parking) in sustainable locations and investigates improving urban quality. The types of changes fall into the remit of the local authorities. (North West Study Manual par.1.3.3 p.4). It tests assumptions made in policies and SPG's which seek to improve quality through controls and standards (North West Study Manual par.1.3.4. p.4-5). It incorporates a re-evaluation of the relationship between urban quality and standards such as parking and density, and the types of policy that might be challenged include parking controls, guidance on types of building and dwelling mix, controls on the conversion of buildings density standards, guidance on open space provision and landscaping guidance on development layout.

⁶⁶ North West Study Manual par.2.3.7 p.16: Scenario 3, the regeneration scenario which focused on innovative solutions in sustainable locations, and envisaged policy changes at local, regional and national levels and changes to implementation mechanisms.

⁶⁷ E.g. London SRQ Study (p.27).

⁶⁸ As in London SRQ Study (Annex 2) and North West Study Manual (Appendix A) (both Llewelyn-Davies *ucs*).

⁶⁹ E.g. North West Study Manual (Appendix A).

⁷⁰ Using whatever survey method they deemed appropriate.

design work.⁷¹ This Yield-Assessment method-type actually generates its yield through design work. The most progress in terms of developing this Design-Led method-type⁷² has probably been made by Llewelyn-Davies, especially if London SRQ Study⁷³ and North-West Study Manual⁷⁴ are taken together. However, other authorities have attempted to use similar methods, for example Urban Initiatives' Hertfordshire Study⁷⁵, also illustrated in *TtP* (p.26), and the Kent Study.

The designs are critical to these method-types, and are generated through the application of different policy positions. These method-types' underlying premise is that the designs equate to particular policy positions (scenarios) and the subsequent dwelling figures (*uc*) reflect these positions when they are applied to real sites in the locality. Typically, these policy positions centre on a number of key issues, some of which have already been addressed under other method-type headings. These issues are:

- design standards, and the connection between design standards, controls and urban quality
- land use designations (primarily a survey concern but here linked into the yield-assessment method, through the ways that the designs are applied to the different sites on the basis of their inclusion into the study)
- the characterisation of the desirability of particular urban forms
- the characterisation of particular areas and sites in terms of the desirability for them to change
- the remit of the different levels of planning authority and their ability to deliver

⁷¹ E.g. both the Wolverhampton Study (p.70) and the Halton Study (p.95-109) included a design element within them, but this was in support of their density-multipliers to demonstrate the possibilities, rather than a method-type to generate actual amounts.

⁷² Or at least the most publicised: other organisations may have done considerable work which for one reason or another, is not widely available or known about in the public realm.

⁷³ London SRQ Study considers design principles (p.17-21) and provides a way of linking these principles to policy positions in its portfolio of designs see the study's Annex 2.

⁷⁴ North West Study Manual provides a full 'tool-kit' of 'design-templates' related to different policy options (Appendix A).

⁷⁵ See the Hertfordshire Study (p.25-73). This *ucs* pre-dates Llewelyn-Davies' London SRQ Study and North West Study Manual and was cited in *Housing and Urban Capacity*, suggesting that Llewelyn-Davies built on this *ucs*.

A concern that *TtP* (p.26) has about this method-type⁷⁶ is the amount of work it entails, with the need for designs to be developed, in addition to all the other work needed to complete an *ucs*.⁷⁷

Nevertheless *TtP* noted that the Design-Led method-type is the:

most effective of all the yield assessment methodologies

TtP (2000), p.26

TtP also emphasised the importance of the Design-Led method-types' design element, and the designs' ability to deliver elements that the Density-Multipliers method-types could not deliver:

some studies have concluded that designs with higher densities than would be allowed by existing plan standards were both a more appropriate response to site conditions and local character as well as being more attractive to the market.

TtP (2000), p.26

design exercises have a valuable role to play in informing judgements about the housing capacity of sites.

TtP (2000), p.26

while producing attractive homes in keeping with the character of the surrounding area

TtP (2000), p.26

This is because they are:

site specific, more accurate⁷⁸ and can investigate site potential more thoroughly⁷⁹

TtP (2000), p.26

⁷⁶ Indeed about the only concern.

⁷⁷ A way to circumvent this time consuming exercise is to adopt another authority's designs, e.g. to use the North West Study Manual. But, if this is done, then the authority needs to adopt the set of design templates with a full understanding of the policies from which they have been generated. If an authority's policy position were very different from the policies on which these scenarios, and consequently designs, are based, then the designs might not be appropriate to the authority and they would need to look elsewhere or generate their own.

⁷⁸ Here a comparison of method-types is being made. This raises the question of which method-types are being compared. In the absence of clarification, and on the assumption that the comparison is on likeness, the method-types must all pertain to the Yield-Assessment stage and therefore must include the Density-Multipliers method-type.

⁷⁹ This is said specifically of Llewelyn-Davies' London SRQ Study, but *TtP*'s thinking (p.25-26) can be applied to the Design-Led method-type in general.

This:

allows more realistic assessment to be made of site's development potential⁸⁰

TtP (2000), p.26

this is particularly true of smaller sites near to local centres where using density multipliers can produce a sub-optimum number of units.

TtP (2000), p.26

6.5.3 *Yardsticks Method-Types*⁸¹

Figure 6.10 *Yardsticks Method-Types' premise*

YIELD-ASSESSMENT METHOD-TYPES		
Method-Types	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Yardsticks	Development-opportunities' yield is poorly ascertained by other Yield-Assessment method-types. Yield is derived through formulaic consideration of development-opportunities/sites.	Yield is seen primarily as a numeric function derived through a formulaic approach and then applied to sites/development-opportunities. Allows <i>uc</i> considerations to include a wider range of source type e.g. LOTS, offices, sub-divisions. Limits considerations of individual site characteristics.

Both the Design-Led method-type and the Density-Multipliers method-type are designed to calculate the housing yield of empty sites (without buildings).⁸² They are less good at calculating the yield of buildings, when the building is retained. So *TtP* (p.27-28) suggested that a different method-type option should be used instead: the Yardsticks method-types, which can estimate the likely housing yield of different buildings, or building categories.

These buildings fall into three main categories:

⁸⁰ Here the question is 'a more realistic assessment than what? One provided by a Density-Multipliers method-type calculation?'

⁸¹ See footnote 7.

⁸² This is not to say that in practice the Design-Led method-type and Density-Multipliers method-type have not been used to calculate the yield of sites that include buildings- South Tyneside used Density-Multipliers to calculate the yields of sites with buildings, and simply assumed that these were cleared for method purposes (an unstated assumption), and North West Study Manual (e.g. Conversion of Non-Residential Buildings section of Appendix A) generated some designs for particular building footprints which could be used in conjunction with the known number of floors to estimate a yield for a building. This might be the basis for *TtP*'s own suggested yardstick for commercial buildings (p.27) as the ratios coincide.

- residential conversions: divisions of residential units in the existing stock, or subdivision of residential units through extension;
- conversions of buildings (vacant or occupied) currently considered under a different category of use other than residential: warehousing, office, other non-residential uses;
- the conversion of existing latent space due to the partial use of a building: empty store rooms and upper room space e.g. LOTS.

An assumption here is that within each of these development-opportunity categories either all or some of these opportunities can be used for housing.

Therefore the Yardsticks method-types are built on a presumption of urban under-use, moreover, that this under-use should be used for housing. They provide a way of estimating these under-used spaces' contribution in numerical terms to the housing yield. So these method-types open up a wider range of development-opportunities, previously difficult to explore.

Yardsticks method-types give a rule-of-thumb estimation of 'specific types of capacity source[s]' (*TtP* p.27) likely yield. These yardsticks are normally borrowed from other, usually more focused studies, which consider the particular development-opportunity⁸³ in greater detail. The yardsticks are then used to estimate the development-opportunities' likely housing yield. Therefore the Yardsticks method-types have two influences; firstly, how and where the yardsticks have been derived from and what they include; secondly, how the yardsticks have been adopted and used.

TtP (p.27) suggested that for the conversion of commercial buildings, the building's floorspace needed to be estimated first. This can be derived from a building's footprint and the number of storeys the building has. *TtP* then suggested that the usable floor area has to be calculated using a gross to net ratio of 80% of the building as usable, and 60% in difficult or deep-plan buildings.⁸⁴ This usable space is then divided up into unit floorspace, allowing 70m² per unit, suggested on the basis of work completed by Urbed (also not referenced).⁸⁵

⁸³ E.g. LOTS, offices etc.

⁸⁴ This is the ratio suggested by *TtP* (p.27) taken from 'some studies'. The ratio is the same as that found in the North West Study Manual (p.52 box 6.2) suggesting that this may be the work that the ratio is devised from.

⁸⁵ This work is not referenced in *TtP* (p.27).

When suggesting a LOTS yardstick, *TtP* cited the Hertfordshire Study’s applied-method. This firstly establishes the ‘potentially available space’ as a third of the retail floor area; it then suggests that a third of this available space can be converted into one/two bedroom flats. Finally it suggests again⁸⁶ that the calculation for the conversion of floorspace into flats can be 70m² per unit.

However, in both cases, it is unclear what exactly has been included in the formulae, and the referencing along with the limited availability of reports makes it difficult to trace back to the original documents to find these details out. In the case of LOTS, South Tyneside⁸⁷ originally intended (accidentally) to misapply the formula⁸⁸ because the *TtP* (p.27) construction of the Hertfordshire Study yardstick did not make clear that the Hertfordshire Study had already discounted for parking and access⁸⁹ and consequently South Tyneside proposed to duplicate this discount.⁹⁰

6.5.4 Yield-Trends Method-Type

Figure 6.11 Yield-Trends Method-Type’s premise

YIELD-ASSESSMENT METHOD-TYPES		
Method-Types	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Yield-Trends	Trends can be used to ascertain yield. Presumes trend data on new development-opportunities is adequate.	Yield is seen primarily as a numeric function derived through trend projection and extrapolation. Historic conditions extended into the future and it is difficult to accommodate policy changes. New development-opportunities can not be explored or are characterised constraining ways in historic renditions e.g. unavailable, limited, constrained.

TtP does not offer Yield-Trends as a method-type for ascertaining the housing yields of development-opportunities. However, the Yield-Trends method-type has been used elsewhere (e.g. Cambridge Study p.15) and therefore needed to be included in this research. The Yield-Trends method-type is time-related, usually measuring in dwelling

⁸⁶ As suggested for commercial buildings.

⁸⁷ In the event, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council did something slightly different (see chapter 9).

⁸⁸ South Tyneside Urban Potential Study Evaluation of Non Site-Specific Potential: 2001 (p.1), unpublished working document.

⁸⁹ Included in their reduction of available space by a third. See Hertfordshire Study p.87 section 7.3.1.

⁹⁰ Given that in almost every other instance *TtP* suggested that the constraint considerations be reserved to the final stage of the *ucs* assessment, and that it is poor practice to consider them at an earlier stage (see for example *TtP* p.29), and that *TtP* goes on to suggest a discounting rate of between 25% and 40% (*TtP* p.33 table 3), the assumption that the constraints would not have been included in the yardstick formula would appear to be a reasonable one, and in the event as part of the completion of their *ucs* South Tyneside did check their formulae and corrected this misapprehension before using the calculation.

per year (dw/yr), rather than in dwelling per hectare/acre (dw/ha). The Yield-Trends method-type relies heavily on past experience, extrapolating the past performance of different development-opportunities to estimate a future housing yield. These trends often rely on planning data, e.g. the completion rates of housing developments, to ascertain the historic yield of particular development-opportunities. For example, the Cambridge Study (p.15) considered the past number of residential-subdivision, calculated that this represented about 6 dw/yr, and then extended this into the future to estimate the number of future dwellings this development-opportunity would produce for the relevant period of time. In this instance, Cambridge estimated 102 dwellings for the period coming from residential-subdivision.

Like other method-types, this method-type can be applied simply or with greater complexity,⁹¹ as assumptions about the market or about planning policies can be factored in, although this begins to reflect the constraints, and has consequently been included as a method-type at the Constraints-Consideration stage (see 6.6.7).

TtP did not mention the use of trends (forecasting) as a Yield-Assessment stage method-type; although *TtP*'s authors were probably aware of it as a possible method-type. However, *Housing and Urban Capacity* noted that:

The disadvantages of the projection based approaches are obvious. The forward projection of a past trend always assumes to a greater or lesser degree that the conditions responsible for producing the historic trend will be replicated in the future.

...In the current climate... virtually none of these conditions apply.

Housing and Urban Capacity (1997), p.L-D 5

Elsewhere it notes that *ucs* should:

permit a reassessment of traditional policies on urban design and consumer preferences

Housing and Urban Capacity (1997), p.13

TtP did reflect these points, noting that an *ucs*:

must also explore the potential to develop ...opportunities more efficiently ...Basing capacity estimates on development standards in existing plans misses this opportunity. It is important to apply the expectations on densities, parking and layout set out in *PPG3[:2000]*.

⁹¹ E.g. the Cambridge Study (p.15) anticipated a decline in the number of windfall sites and this was factored into the calculation by reducing the trend from 70 dw/yr to 50 dw/yr for the last 7 years of the period.

Those studies which have explored potential to use sites more efficiently have used one of two methods: density multipliers or a design based approach.

TtP (2000), p.23

These statements appear to criticise Yield-Trends as a Yield-Assessment method-type, and indicate a clear preference for other method-types first put forward by *Housing and Urban Capacity*, then echoed in *TtP*. So it is possible to surmise that *TtP* has purposely omitted Yield-Trends as a method-type from its suggested Yield-Assessment Stage method-type set to dissuade authorities from using it.

6.6 The Constraints-Consideration Stage Method-Types

These method-types identify and account for the constraints, which prevent the development-opportunities from being fully utilised. Usually this is done by deducting a proportion of the housing yield, estimated by the earlier *ucs* stages, on the grounds of one constraint or another. Therefore they produce a reduced estimate of the housing yield.

TtP did less to identify and define the Constraint-Considerations stage method-types (see chapter 5) than those at the other stages,⁹² so this research has used what *TtP* did provide, but also developed method-types which reflected the methods being applied in the *ucs*, found by looking at the *ucs*, to fill the gap. The first method-type outlined below is the one suggested by *TtP*. The remaining method-types have been derived from this research's own observations of the method-types used in the *ucs*.

As these method-types were not produced by *TtP*, it also did not critique them directly. However, *TtP* has critiqued examples of different *ucs*' discounting process, and has laid out guidelines on its expectations of *ucs* discounting in the future. Using these principles, and the previous advice of *Housing and Urban Capacity* and in *Planning for Sustainable Development* (1998, p.30-31),⁹³ it is possible to gain a sense of the likely position of government on particular Constraint-Consideration method-types.

⁹² Survey stage and Yield-Assessment stage.

⁹³ It should be noted here that this advice spans a period of 3 years, and that elsewhere in this research these texts have been discussed in terms of how the principles within them have changed over time (see chapter 4). The principles here all appear to adhere to *TtP*'s position, to try to give consistency between the position being taken here and that found elsewhere in *TtP*'s critiques of different method-types. Where earlier principles have not been supported by *TtP* they have not been included (although they have been discussed in chapter 4).

These principles include:

- Considering the constraints at the end of the *ucs* rather than throughout⁹⁴
- Setting the constraints in a positive view of urban living⁹⁵
- Setting aside pre-conceived expectations⁹⁶
- Thorough approaches to surveying and assessing capacity to reduce estimate⁹⁷
- Identifying trigger mechanisms and cost thresholds to illuminate areas where capacity is contingent on choice⁹⁸
- Developing a strategy or action plan to tackle identified constraints⁹⁹

These principles form the basis of this research's government critique of the method-types, through setting them against the described method-types, to see how well these method-types adhere to them. However, it is this research's constructed government critique and therefore does not represent the government as reliably as the critiques taken from *TtP*. *TtP*'s (p.29-33) preferred method-type is of course its own: the Discounting method-type.

⁹⁴ Reflected in *Planning for Sustainable Development* (p.31 point 2), and in *TtP* (p.29): authorities should resist the temptation to introduce discounting into earlier stages of the process.

⁹⁵ Reflected in *Planning for Sustainable Development* (p.31 point 2 and par. 2.3.11), in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.19 par. 4.17 and p.22 par. 5.6) and in *TtP* (p.30) 'Discounting should reflect objectives of *PPG3[2000]*;' 'and should identify what is likely to be realistically achievable with the new context established by *PPG3[2000]*.'

⁹⁶ 'The usefulness of the discounting stage can be undermined by embedding into discounting processes pre-conceived expectations' (*TtP* p.29) and 'the process should not be limited by expectations based on past performance (*TtP* p. 30) and 'with a temporary suspension of the preconceptions upon which policies are built' (*Housing and Urban Capacity* par. 4.18 p.L-D 19, cited in *Planning for Sustainable Development* par. 2.3.7, p.30) and 'capacity assessments are also constrained by conventional views of consumer preferences in the housing market' (*Housing and Urban Capacity* p.L-D 23 par. 5.8).

⁹⁷ *TtP* (p.30); also reflected in *Housing and Urban Capacity*'s suggestion that market research was required (p.L-D 23 par. 5.8).

⁹⁸ Reflected in *Housing and Urban Capacity* par. 5.4 p.L-D22, *Planning for Sustainable Development* (p.31 point 7) and connected to *TtP*'s notion of 'proactive planning combined with favourable market conditions given impetus by *PPG3[2000]*.'

⁹⁹ *Planning for Sustainable Development* (p.31, point 8 in par. 2.3.9); also reflected in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (par. 4.23, p.L-D 20) and linked into *TtP*'s idea of 'specific measures to deliver the extra yield', citing three examples: the acquisition of sites through CPOs, regeneration funding, and targeting infrastructure (p.33). It also linked into *TtP*'s more general view of 'proactive planning to unlock capacity' (p.33).

6.6.1 *TtP's Discounting Method-Type*

Figure 6.12 *TtP's Discounting Method-Type's premise*

CONSTRAINTS-CONSIDERATION STAGE		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Discounting (As Rudlin suggests)	Policy is more influential than development-opportunity constraints as policy can overcome some constraints.	Method-type extends the constraint considerations to alter policies, funding initiatives etc. to overcome the constraints. Uc becomes an argument for making changes to the planning system and practice.
Discounting (As it is often applied)	It is undesirable and/or difficult to develop some sites; therefore discount them.	According to application: most development-opportunities are discounted due to the undesirability of developing them – very constraining. The remaining few development-opportunities may be explored through policy changes to encourage their development.

The method-type advocated by *TtP* to assess the impact of the constraints on the development-opportunities was Discounting. This method-type accepted that a proportion of the unconstrained capacity would not be achieved due to a variety of different constraints, e.g. physical site constraints, market conditions etc. *TtP* therefore suggested that a proportion of the total unconstrained capacity of each development-opportunity should be deducted (discounted) to reflect the impact of the constraints on the development-opportunities.

The amount to be deducted was left to the judgement and expertise of the practitioners carrying out the *ucs*, although the constraints to be considered were highlighted in *TtP* (p.30-32). *TtP* (p.33) also emphasised the need to take into account the changed planning regime reflected in *PPG3:2000*, and to help practitioners to determine whether they were discounting appropriately. *TtP* (Table 3 p.33) also offered a range of discounts for each development-opportunity; e.g. for the subdivision of existing housing it suggested a discounting rate of 25%-40% discount, i.e. that between 60% and 75% of the development-opportunity's assessed yield was achievable. It advocated that these should be used as a guide, rather than as a standard which should be uniformly applied.

In the development of this method-type, Rudlin¹⁰⁰ looked at a number of ways that *ucs* had considered the constraints in the past, and perceived that most *ucs* focused on how the constraints prevented development from occurring, emphasising these difficulties. Yet

¹⁰⁰ This research was presented at conference *PPG3 Housing- Implementing the New Policy Guidance*, organised by *room/DETR* Positive Planning Seminars 16/03/2001 in Birmingham.

Rudlin saw policy, rather than the constraints, as the determining factor in the impact these constraints had on the development-opportunities.

This is reflected in *TtP*'s comment that:

...figures over 40% (and particularly over 60%) tend to require specific measures to deliver the extra housing yield. These might include acquisition of key sites (through CPOs), regeneration funding, or the targeting of infrastructure to open up certain areas.

TtP (2000), p.33

Therefore within the Discounting method-type, as it is presented by *TtP*, there is an assumption that policy should be proactive, that the discounting rates should reflect this, and that rather than concentrating on the impact of the constraints the emphasis should be placed on considering policies which might overcome them.

Since the production of *TtP*, a number of *ucs* have used the Discounting method-type (e.g. Wychavon Study, South Hams Study, Avon Study). However, the way that they have applied it appears to differ from the way that *TtP* suggested. In some instances, e.g. the Wychavon Study and the Hart Study, a variety of constraints were identified, e.g. physical constraints, market viability etc., and sites which were judged to be detrimentally affected by these constraints, preventing development, were discounted. Therefore the emphasis remained on the constraints. In other instances, e.g. parts of the Avon Study, a proportion of particular development-opportunities were discounted so that the Avon Study (p.32) discounted a percentage of the total amount of yield generated for redevelopment-of-existing-uses.

Therefore there appears to be some discrepancy between the way *TtP* anticipated this method-type being used, with its emphasis on policy, and the way that it is actually being used, often with a continuing emphasis on constraint. The impact of this discrepancy will be reflected upon in more detail in the analysis of chapter 7.

6.6.2 Levels-of-Difficulty Method-Type¹⁰¹

Figure 6.13 Levels-of-Difficulty (Traffic lighting) Method-Type’s premise

CONSTRAINTS-CONSIDERATION STAGE		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Levels-of-Difficulty (Traffic Lighting)	The likelihood of different sites being developed varies, due to the cumulative difficulties of the site characteristic; many of these difficulties can be overcome.	Extends consideration to each development-opportunity’s unique development issues usually with the aim of reducing these difficulties. Highlights what can be done, and sites most likely to be developed. Uc shifts from being a persuasive argument for preventing further development to being a persuasive argument for increased development.
	Development difficulties can be overcome- explores funding, policies etc. to achieve this.	Method extends consideration to site difficulties and looks at changing funding arrangements, policies etc. to assist the overcoming of these difficulties. Uc becomes an argument for making changes to the planning system and practice.

The Levels-of-Difficulty method-type¹⁰² uses a matrix to present the constraints that impact upon development-opportunities (see Figure 6.14) This matrix is based on particular sites, on which are imposed different constraints: notably market constraints and policy constraints. These constraints are portrayed as variable through the use of scenarios. So, for example, the market constraint may include a scenario for an ‘average’ housing market, a weak market and a strong market and the policy scenarios may reflect whether development is highly desirable, preferred but unlikely, or discouraged, which is likely to be a reflection of the particular development-opportunity as well as policy. When set against the particular sites with their own physical constraints within the matrix, the matrix demonstrates the likelihood of the different site development-opportunities coming forward.

Given its complexity, this is usually used to assess the impact of these variable constraints on a subset of a particular development-opportunity category, e.g. a sample set of sites, or buildings, rather than all the sites and all the buildings. However from this matrix it is possible to estimate different housing yields for different development- opportunity categories in different conditions under different policies.

¹⁰¹ Taken from research survey of ucs.

¹⁰² Also called ‘Traffic Lighting’ by one of its creators- Barton (2000) at a workshop on uc assessment organised by UWE: One-Day short course on ‘Urban Capacity’, Bristol, 1/12/00. Barton devised this method-type with Baker Associates as part of their commission of an ucs for the South West Region (the South West Study).

This method-type builds in considerable flexibility through its scenarios, and attempts through its matrix to investigate how changes in the constraints alter their impact on the development-opportunities. Also through its matrix-format the method-type allows the constraints on a particular development-opportunity to be considered in the context of each other. Here the constraints scenarios are constructed independently of each other, so they do not incorporate the influence that changes in one may have on the other, although as the matrix attempts to cover all eventualities, it is possible to observe (in the matrix) the point where the conditions are met.

TiP does not reflect upon this method-type. However, it is possible to apply the critique principles discussed above. This method-type reflects on the constraints at the end of the *ucs*, as suggested. It also allows the constraints to change considerably, thereby setting aside pre-conceived expectations on how the constraints will perform and impact the development-opportunities.

Furthermore, this method-type's matrix enables the identification of different policies and initiatives which might reduce the constraints impact on the development-opportunities, rather than accepting policy as a given and as unalterable. So it is likely that the government would consider this method-type favourably, although it does still focus on the constraints, seeing policy coming out of the constraints rather than being imposed upon them, the apparently critical distinction made by Rudlin.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ At conference *PPG3 Housing- Implementing the New Policy Guidance*, organised by room/DETR Positive Planning Seminars 16/03/2001 in Birmingham.

Figure 6.14 Example of a Level-of-Difficulty matrix (not taken from any particular ucs)

Constraints	Scenarios	Sites			
		Site A (Named, located, and referenced) (greenfield, well located)	Site B (Well used recreation space in urban centre)	Site C (Currently under-used office block)	Site D (Contaminated site)
Market (market performance is)	Poor	Likely to be marketable (GREEN)			
	Average		Possible to develop (AMBER)	Change of use problems- different uses different market performances (AMBER/ RED)	
	Good				Likely to need very buoyant market (RED)
Environment Capacity (development is seen to be)	Undesirable		Current use needs to be protected (RED)		
	Acceptable	Not desirable but possible (RED/ AMBER)		Acceptable - would need change of use (AMBER/ GREEN)	
	Desirable				Desirable (GREEN)
Development Viability	Easy to develop	Easy to develop (GREEN)	Easy to develop (GREEN)		
	OK				
	Development would need help				Needs grant assistance (AMBER/ RED)
Notes about site	Notes:	Undesirable but easy development	Undesirable development		Desirable but very difficult development
	Likelihood of development	Unlikely- undesirable (RED/ AMBER)	Protect against development (RED)	Desirable but change of use issues/ owners desire to develop (AMBER)	Difficult but desirable- grant needed? (AMBER/RED)
	Anticipated phasing	Late phase- when other more desirable land used	Not to be developed	Late phase- need to work on change of use	Mid to Late phase depending on market and grant availability
	Contribution to housing yield	Yield to be added only when shortfall of housing proven	Deduct any site yield from total	Yield added in at late phase factor a proportion out- not all comparable sites will be developed	Yield added in at late stage- factor in different proportion for different market scenarios

6.6.3 Scoring-Matrices¹⁰⁴ Method-Type

Figure 6.15 Scoring Matrices Method-Type's premise

CONSTRAINTS-CONSIDERATION STAGE		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Scoring-Matrices	The ability to develop can be represented as a score – a low score suggests a more difficult development-opportunity. Market seen as asset (20): problems overcomeable. Other constraints score up to 5. Constraints presented as overcomeable.	Converts constraints into scores, with the market positively predominating (weighted in favour of development). Uc seen as achievable and constraints portrayed as overcomeable.

The North West Study Manual offers a Scoring-Matrices method-type (p.86-102).¹⁰⁵ This, it suggests, should be filled in by ‘suitably qualified’ people:¹⁰⁶

the matrix can not turn planners into chartered surveyors or property agents.

North West Study Manual (1998), p.86

This matrix focuses on the market and whether the constraints are primarily linked to supply-side issues (the cost of providing units) or demand-side issues (no one would buy at the price asked).¹⁰⁷ In this method-type, a distinction is made between sites and buildings and the strengths and weaknesses of each site’s and building’s locality are identified.¹⁰⁸

The dominant constraint identified by this method-type as an asset is ‘the performance of the property market.’¹⁰⁹ The assets of each site are graded within the range. A high score at this point indicates a site, or building, is more likely to attract developers’ attention. This produces the ‘site desirability value (SDV)’ or the ‘conversion desirability value (CDV)’ (North West Study Manual p.93 and p.98).

¹⁰⁴ Taken from research survey of ucs.

¹⁰⁵ These tables have been called matrixes but they are primarily tables to assist scoring, with single areas matrixed against one another. This matrixes the site desirability value against the liabilities.

¹⁰⁶ District valuers, surveyors etc., who may work for the local authority in other departments.

¹⁰⁷ For example, in some other ucs e.g. East Midlands Study Manual p.13, it was noted that the prevalence of relatively cheap terraced housing in the area dampened the demand for flats making flat type development not viable. This can be construed to be more of a demand problem -people do not want and do not need to consider the option of living in flats if they can afford a house- than a supply problem, linked to how much it costs to decontaminate a site, or improve its access, or assemble the land etc.

¹⁰⁸ These include a consideration of the property market (with a range between 10 and 30), the environment (range 0-5), amenities (range 0-5), public transport (range 0-5), local activity i.e. other recent house building in the locality (range 0-5), and grants (range 0-5); all viewed as possible ‘assets’.

¹⁰⁹ Concentrating on the locality of property and the perceived desirability of that property in that area rather than the performance of the housing market compared to other development markets or the performance of the housing market in terms of buoyancy (buyers/sellers market).

Next, the individual site liabilities¹¹⁰ are scored. These reflect primarily on the site itself and the constraints likely to prevent the development or conversion of particular sites or buildings. Here the higher the score the higher the liability. This score is the ‘total liability value’. These two scores (the SDV/CDV and the total liability value) are matrixed together as part of the overall site scoring grid, to provide a matrix within the table which looks like *Figure 6.16*.

This matrix is completed for each site (and each scenario¹¹¹- generated at the Yield-Assessment stage).¹¹² By noting for example that a site falls in box 5 (scoring in SDV range of 25-34 and the liability range of 8-13), it is possible to determine that the site is thought to have medium site desirability and significant liabilities, which makes it a marginal site for development.

*Figure 6.16 Matrix section taken from figure 9.1 of North West Study Manual (1998) p.93**

	Site/Conversion Desirability Value (S/CDV)**		
	Low (10-24)	Medium (25-34)	High (35-55)
Liabilities			
Very Significant (14-23)	1	2	3
Significant (8-13)	4	5	6
Less Significant (1-7)	7	8	9
No Liabilities (0)	10	11	12

* shading taken from figure 9.1a North West Study Manual p.94 and figure 9.2a North West Study Manual p.98

** SDV taken from figure 9.1 North West Study Manual p.93 and CDV taken from figure 9.2 North West Study Manual p.97¹¹³

Key:

Site/buildings very unlikely to come forward for development/conversion
Marginal site/building
Sites/buildings likely to come forward for development/conversion

¹¹⁰ These include ‘abnormals’ (usually related to ground conditions: need for demolition, greenfield), access, services and other (specified) viewed as ‘liabilities and cost’.

¹¹¹ See figures 9.1a North West Study Manual (p.94) and 9.2a North West Study Manual (p.98).

¹¹² If density-multipliers had been used previously then theoretically they could be linked to the different density-multipliers used and the number of units each of these different density-multipliers generated.

¹¹³ The CDV figure includes the additional liability considerations linked to the building plan and whether it is listed.

From these completed site sheets it is possible to make comparisons across the sites, both in terms of their development desirability and their site constraints, and to gain some insight into the costs likely to be incurred overcoming these constraints. In addition to this it is possible to ascertain whether the constraints are primarily supply-side or demand-side constraints, and whether the viability of developing particular sites alters depending on the yield it is likely to produce.

There are similarities between this method-type and the Levels-of-Difficulty method-type. Both use matrices to determine the developability of the identified sites, and both produce matrixed site assessed results to consider the varying likelihood of these sites and buildings being developed. The Levels-of-Difficulty method-type's terminology focuses on the difficulties, whilst the Scoring-Matrices method-type's terminology concentrates on the desirability of development. The Level-of-Difficulty method-type concentrates on supply-side constraints, as defined by the Scoring-Matrices method-type; the Scoring-Matrices method-type includes demand-side constraints. Nevertheless, both note the varying desirability of allowing some sites to developed, and consider policy alterations accordingly.

Given these method-types' similarity, much of the Levels-of-Difficulty method-type's critique applies equally well to the Scoring-Matrices method-type; and it accords with the principle of considering the constraints at the end of the *ucs*, being step 7 in the North-West Study Manual.

It encourages a specialist investigative approach, looking at the actual development-opportunities and constraints rather than assuming these will always perform in predetermined ways. This concurs with the principle of setting aside pre-conceived expectations, and the notion that up-to-date information gleaned from site-surveys will reduce speculative estimation.

The method-type also highlights the particular constraints, their characteristics, and leaves space to consider strategies to overcome them. However, the method-type does not consider these strategies itself.¹¹⁴ Therefore the likelihood is that the government would favour this method-type in terms of its ability to identify and reflect on the constraints. However the government might be critical of the method-type, stopping short of considering the strategies to overcome these constraints. The government might also be

¹¹⁴ Although within the North West Study Manual context strategies and mechanisms proactively trying to create development catalysts in urban areas appear particularly in scenario 3 of the Design-Led method-type in the Yield-Assessment stage (see p.5-6 and p.85).

critical of the method-type's focus on the constraints rather than on policy aimed at reducing their impact.

6.6.4 Focus-Groups/Perception-Surveys Method-Type¹¹⁵

Figure 6.17 Focus-groups/Perception Surveys Method-Type's premise

CONSTRAINTS-CONSIDERATION STAGE		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Focus-Group/ Perception-Survey	Development constraints not fully known/understood. So need to explore possibilities with interested stakeholders.	Begins to extend the constraints considerations beyond their limitations to begin to seek solutions (through stakeholder consultation). <i>Uc</i> is more a consideration of how development hindrances can be overcome.
	Constraints can be overcome; need to think/demonstrate to stakeholders how this is possible.	Extends the constraints consideration through proactive stakeholder discussion with the aim of increasing yield. <i>Uc</i> shifts from being a persuasive argument for preventing further development to being a persuasive argument for increased development

The Focus-Group/Perception-Survey method-type appears in *ucs* as early as the Hertfordshire Study (1996). This method-type assumes that the constraints' impact is unknown, and that it is best discovered through talking with affected stakeholders and specialists, e.g. the community, developers, estate-agents etc.

Many *ucs* discuss specific constraints with particular specialists,¹¹⁶ and the perception of development with wider affected audiences,¹¹⁷ through focus-group meetings. Other *ucs* seek out this information through surveying.¹¹⁸ So, the Focus-Group/Perception-Survey method-type aims to discover the perception of the impact of development on the locality, the constraints that prevent it, and whether there is sufficient support for policies aimed at enabling development.

¹¹⁵ Taken from research survey of *ucs*.

¹¹⁶ For example the Hertfordshire Study discussed the market constraints with housebuilders and developers (Hertfordshire Study:1996 p.8 and chapters 5-6 p.73-84).

¹¹⁷ The Hertfordshire Study discussed with residents, landowners, and the public the sensitivity of their proposals and the likely ability to develop the housing yield in the ways portrayed in the study (Hertfordshire Study p.8 and chapters 5-6 p.73-84).

¹¹⁸ The East Midlands Study Manual also presented a survey sheet for stakeholders to complete to determine the social acceptability of their proposals, albeit an optional part of their suggested study method framework (East Midlands Study Manual Annex C p.11-14).

This method-type has two distinct emphases. The first concentrates on the existing perceptions of the constraints, with the primary aim of identifying these perceptions and reflecting on their likely reductive effect on the development-opportunities.

The second emphasis also identifies the development-opportunities' constraints but begins to strategise ways of overcoming them.¹¹⁹ This could take the form of either trying out possible pre-determined policy options to gain feedback on their likely viability, or of seeking initiatives from the stakeholders themselves, to discover what policies would make a difference.

Although this method-type certainly does not accept "experts'" opinions as given, the emphasis of this first application of the method-type makes this exercise primarily a fact-finding one, concentrating as it does on existing perceptions, and limiting itself to validating the existing situation without extending it. However, the second application of this method-type does begin to extend its thinking into investigating consumer preference and future policy options, which might reduce the impact of the constraints on development-opportunities.

When set against the evaluation principles outlined before (section 6.6), the first application of this Focus-Group/Perception-Survey method-type does indeed set aside pre-conceived expectations, allows an investigative approach, and is thorough in its surveying. It may also present a more positive view of urban-living but this is more obvious in the second application of this method-type. However, this application of this method-type does not seek to alter pre-existing perceptions or policy, it only aims to confirm the practitioners' views of them. This stops short of some of the government's expectations.

The second application of this method-type does make this exploratory step into stakeholders' perceptions of policy, with a view to changing both the perceptions and the policies to overcome undesirable constraints. This suggests that this application of this method-type accords favourably with government expectations.

¹¹⁹ Hertfordshire Study's (p.81-82) discussion with the landowner group went further to discuss the types of incentives that would need to be offered to encourage them to allow development.

6.6.5 Constraints-Discussion Method-Type¹²⁰

Figure 6.18 Constraints-Discussion Method-Type's premise

CONSTRAINTS-CONSIDERATION STAGE		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Constraints-Discussion	The existing constraints are difficult to change and in many instances such changes may be undesirable.	Method concentrates on the existing constraints, particularly existing policy. It may reflect on ways to overcome some constraints, but makes little commitment to alter policy. Constraints other than policy constraints are usually taken as given, unless policy might influence them. This limits the considerations of <i>uc</i> by concentrating on the existing position and on presuming that the existing position should be protected.
	Constraints can be overcome, need to demonstrate to stakeholders how this is possible.	Extends the constraints consideration through proactive discussions with the aim of increasing yield. <i>Uc</i> shifts from being a persuasive argument for preventing further development to being a persuasive argument for increased development.

The Constraints-Discussion Method-Type describes the constraints influencing a particular development-opportunity and surmises their likely impact. Whilst not exclusively used for outlining the policy constraints this is the constraint category most often represented this way. The discussion of this method-type refers to the way that the *ucs* presented information in a discursive format, and it can be organised around the development-opportunities,¹²¹ or around the constraints,¹²² or both.¹²³

The method-type is also quite opaque. This is partly due to *ucs* usually presenting their findings gathered through other method-types, i.e. through discussion, in written formats, without necessarily explaining them fully;¹²⁴ but it is also due to this method-type presenting a case and then making a judgement, without always indicating how these co-relate. In some instances there are very clear clues. The *ucs* may present existing policy as if it cannot be changed, or may highlight constraining influences stating they are undesirable, e.g. loss of green space, or unalterable, e.g. floodrisk. However, often the

¹²⁰ Taken from research survey of *ucs*.
¹²¹ E.g. South Tyneside Brownfield Study set out the policy constraints for each individual site.
¹²² E.g. the Cambridge Study reflected on how the infrastructure constraints impacts Cambridge's future development-opportunities (p.5-7).
¹²³ E.g. the North East Arup Study is organised into different development-opportunities, and the constraints influencing these development-opportunities are reflected in under-subheadings under each of these development-opportunities.
¹²⁴ E.g. the Cambridge Study (p.5-7) presented a very abridged version of their Focus-Groups/Perception-Surveys method-type findings, gathered from service-providers reflecting on the constraints of their respective infrastructures; and London 2000 Study and Avon Study both provided summative discussions of their completed *ucs*, reflecting on particular constraints where they felt it was relevant.

judgement is not clearly related to the discussion, making it difficult to see how the development-opportunities' yield was reduced.

When compared against the evaluation principles, the tendency of *ucs* using this method-type to discuss the constraints in parts of the *ucs* other than the Constraints-Consideration stage, resulting in the yield being calculated after the constraints have been considered, is a practice that contradicts *TtP*'s advice, and makes tracking assumptions difficult (*TtP* p.29). Its discussion of the constraints may also be explorative or merely descriptive; and again, where it is descriptive it counters government advice, but where exploratory it accords with it. This suggests that the way this method-type is applied is the main determining factor on how well this method-type accords with government's advice, perhaps more than for any other method-type.

6.6.6 Technical-Modelling Method-Type

Figure 6.19 Technical-Modelling Method-Type's premise

CONSTRAINTS-CONSIDERATION STAGE		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Technical Modelling	Constraints can be modelled and applied to yields to ascertain their impact.	The model is used to determine the impact of development on particular constraints, for example infrastructure. The model emphasises the constraining element and the impact of development on this element, not the impact of the constraint upon the development. This sets the constraint as something that is fixed and consequently makes <i>uc</i> something restrictive.

A further method-type used by some *ucs* is the technical-modelling method-type. This method-type uses technically simulated models to reflect on policy, development-opportunities, and their constraints. The Leicestershire/Leicester *ucs* offers one example of this method-type, which incidentally highlights many of the issues related to this method-type's usage in an *ucs*.

In this example the *ucs* used a strategic transport model to consider the impact of planning strategies, including housing policy, on the local transport network. This example chose a simulation package robust enough to test different strategies,¹²⁵ which suggests that the model allows housing policy to be explored, and so it does, but only within a set of pre-determined parameters.

¹²⁵ The Leicestershire/Leicester Study itself noted that not all models are equally appropriate, dismissing two such model options (START and TRIPS) but used CALTRANS, viewed as a: 'strategic model and therefore robust in testing strategies' (Leicestershire/Leicester Study (1996) Appendix 1 par. 11 no page number).

The first parameter is that the model can only explore policy within the context of what it already contains, i.e. it cannot explore development-opportunities which fall beyond the model's boundaries, or categorise development-opportunities in ways other than the ways in which they have already been programmed. These are pre-set for the model's previous task, and are not necessarily the best for an *ucs*.

The second parameter is that the model can only explore issues related to its specific design. As this model was primarily a transport model it was good at exploring transport-related issues, but was poor at exploring housing-related ones.

The third parameter, related to the first two, is that the model can only do what it is designed to do. Therefore this model could explore the impact of development options and changes of planning policy on the transport network; it could not explore the impact of the transport network on the development options, although it might have been able to reflect on ways of extending it.

This has a number of implications for the understanding of *ucs*. It implies that the capacity of the transport network provides a threshold which cannot be changed, and which development eventually reaches, and it implies that the important relationship between housing and transport is the impact of housing on transport, not the impact of transport on housing.

Whilst the details of this example may be specific to it, the points raised from it have a wider application to the whole Technical-Modelling method-type, excepting perhaps the case where a technical model was specifically designed to reflect the concerns of an *ucs*.

Therefore as a Constraints-Consideration stage method-type in an *ucs*, technical models do reflect on the constraints, and can be used at the end of the *ucs* in accordance with the evaluation principles set out above. However, they are likely to limit the evaluation and exploration of policy as it relates to housing through pre-set model parameters; they have built-in inflexibility in relation to housing issues, and they pre-determine the constraints' dominance over the development-opportunities. None of this accords well with the government's evaluation principles.

6.6.7 Constraint-Trends Method-Type¹²⁶

Figure 6.20 Constraint-Trends Method-Type's premise

CONSTRAINTS-CONSIDERATION STAGE		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on UC
Constraint-Trends	The existing dynamics that are affecting the performance of urban areas will continue.	Trends project existing conditions forward, so the method-type is constrained to exploring only the identified development-opportunities in the context of existing performance. The impact of contextual change, (e.g. policy, market etc.) cannot be considered.

The Constraint-Trends method-type is primarily a reflection of the Yield-Trends method-type discussed under the Yield-Assessment stage (section 6.5.4.) However, the Constraint-Trends method-type reflects the fact that some *ucs* reductively factor a trend, on the pretext that the trend will be inaccurate if it is simply projected. The most commonly identified constraint suggested is that sites will become less available.¹²⁷ This effectively provides an additional constraint to the existing constraints already contained within the trend itself.¹²⁸

The Constraint-Trends method-type also includes the trends of particular constraints, e.g. market trends or planning permission trends (Cambridge Study p.9-11), which reflect the constraint's influence on a particular development-opportunity. This influence is determined from past performance and is projected into the future.

Housing and Urban Capacity was very critical of trends, suggesting that they:

...[Assume] a constant land supply or stock of buildings, steady market conditions, a consistent policy base and consistent legal and administrative framework and many other factors besides. virtually none of these conditions apply, Land is running out, demographic trends seem bound to influence housing demand, the policy context is evolving rapidly ... and the administrative framework is likely to follow suit.

Housing and Urban Capacity (1997), p.L-D 5-6

¹²⁶ Taken from research survey of *ucs*.
¹²⁷ An example of this would be the Cambridge Study's treatment of windfall sites. Here Cambridge uses trends to calculate the yield (70 dw/yr) but changes this to 50 dw/yr for the last 7 years- effectively factoring the yield by -20 dw/yr. This is to take into account the anticipated fact that the supply of sites is seen to be finite and will decline in the period after 2009 (Cambridge Study p.15).
¹²⁸ As the trend is a reflection of the development-opportunities' past performance in their past contexts, the trend already includes the influence of the market, policy, location etc, in its expression, and these do not need to be considered separately.

These concerns relate as much to the use of Trends method-types at the Constraints-Consideration stage as they do at the Yield-Assessment stage, and this research has taken their omission from *TtP* to mean that government's preference is for their non-use, not their inclusion in an *ucs*.

6.7 The Government's Preferences

TtP offered a range of method-types at the Survey and Yield-Assessment stages of an *ucs* and a single method-type at the Constraints-Consideration stage. However its discussion of these method-types demonstrates clear preferences.

At the Survey stage, it was most positive about the Total-Coverage-Survey, although it did acknowledge that the resource implications of this method-type were high. *TtP* was also positive about Priority-Areas method-types (the Natural-Dynamic and Imposed-Dynamic were combined in *TtP* p.20). The main criticism of them was the possibility of missing out minor development-opportunities, which fell outside their survey area. This *TtP* (p.19) felt was a method-type application problem, not an inherent weakness of the method-type. The Typical-Urban-Areas method-type was seen as more problematic (*TtP* p.21-22), with some fairly strong criticisms made about the inherent limitations of the method-type, and the Existing-Data method-type (*TtP* p.17-18) was portrayed more as a starting point rather than a method-type in its own right.

Looking at the government-critiques of the Survey stage method-types, both in *TtP* and previously, it would appear that government prefers method-types that:

- Carry out site visits rather than draw on statistical data
- Emphasise the ability to change
- Either look at, or can look at, policy issues, and that do or can incorporate these into the characterisation of sites, and urban areas.

At the Yield-Assessment stage *TtP* (p.23-26) overtly favoured the Design-Led method-type over the Density-Multipliers method-type:

the [Design-Led method-type] has several advantages [over Density-Multipliers method-type] and is the most effective of all the yield assessment methodologies for most capacity sources¹²⁹

TtP (2000), p.25

¹²⁹ Excluding subdivision, conversion, flats over shops and intensification- exclusion footnoted in *TtP* (footnote 56 p.25).

However, *TtP* did at least present Density-Multipliers method-type as an option, albeit with considerable reservation (*TtP* p.23-p.24). It failed even to mention the Trends method-types (either at the Yield-Assessment or the Constraints-Consideration stages). These are criticised elsewhere as:

having little value...because a move away from historic trends is a prerequisite of achieving the objective

Housing and Urban Capacity (1997), par 3.13 L-D 11

and consequently, appear to have disappeared from the government's guidance (*TtP* itself). For estimating buildings' likely yields, *TtP* offered Yardsticks method-types, related to specific development-opportunity categories,¹³⁰ as the best way forward, although some *ucs* had used other method-types.¹³¹

Therefore the key Yield-Assessment method-type features that the government favoured were:

- site specific method-types rather than numerical or statistical calculations
- policy linked method-types reflecting the alternative stances in policy positions
- method-types focusing on yield generation rather than allowing constraint considerations to creep in.

Finally, at the Constraints-Consideration stage, government's preferred method-type features are the principles previously listed on page 186. These are:

- Considering the constraints at the end of the *ucs* rather than throughout
- Setting the constraints in a positive view of urban living
- Setting aside pre-conceived expectations
- Thorough approaches to surveying and assessing capacity to reduce estimate
- Identifying trigger mechanisms and cost thresholds to illuminate areas where capacity is contingent on choice
- Developing a strategy or action plan to tackle identified constraints.

¹³⁰ Subdivision, conversion, flats over shops (in this research LOTS), and intensification (*TtP* p.27-8).

¹³¹ According to *TtP* footnote 56 (p.25), Yardsticks are better than the Design-Led method-type (which is thought generally to be the best method-type) for discovering conversion yields.

Therefore, government is as likely to be reserved about Trends method-types at the Constraints-Consideration stage as it is at the Yield-Assessment stage. The Constraints-Discussion method-type also fails to meet many of these government expectations. The Focus-Groups/Perception-Surveys method-type adheres more closely to these evaluative principles, but this method-type is strongly influenced by its application. North West Study Manual's Scoring-Matrices method-type identifies and describes different constraints favourably, with an emphasis on their changeability, but it does not extend into examining the impact of policy alterations, an important aspect of government thinking. The Levels-of-Difficulty method-type allows space for the constraints of development-opportunities to be considered in the light of changing policy, suggesting that this method-type meets most of government's preferences set out above. Finally, *TtP* itself offered the Discounting method-type, over all these method-types; it must therefore be perceived to be their preferred option.

So it would appear that government has very clear method-type preferences at each stage, and secondly that they have some criteria which drive those preferences.

Chapter 7 The *UCS* Survey: The Analysis of the *UCS* Methods

Chapter 7 The *UCS* Survey: The Analysis of the *UCS*

Methods

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will reflect on how the *ucs*’ expression of *uc* is manifested through the *ucs* assessment methods, and how these relate to this research’s models, to gain an understanding of, firstly, how the *uc* concept has been constructed through its assessment; and secondly, how this has or has not evolved. The chapter will then reflect on the implications of this (non)-evolution. The chapter will use the method-types outlined in the previous chapter to analyse the *ucs* applied-methods in the ways described in chapter 5 to reflect on how they express *uc*, and the implication of these findings.

The chapter starts by reflecting on the fit of the different *ucs* in relation to the *ucs*’ method structure, and the method-types described in chapter 5. It then characterises the stage premises, i.e. the underlying concepts on which the stages are built, and reflects on the bias these should produce in the method-types before exploring the method-types themselves to discover the method-type biases at each stage that are actually produced. The subsequent section focuses on the aggregated-method¹ bias, drawing from the findings in the previous sections. It reflects on how these method-types work together, and are applied together in an *ucs*, and the biases this produces. The final section reflects on the government’s preferences of *uc* method-types (drawing from the findings of chapter 6), how these relate to the method-type biases found in the analysis presented here, and how this subsequently relates to the way government argued *uc* (discussed in chapter 4).

7.2 The Fit of the *UCS* Applied-Methods to the Method-Types

For the purposes of this research the *ucs* applied-methods were set against this research’s method-types (see *Figure 7.1*).² However, unsurprisingly the fit of the *ucs* applied-methods against the method-types varied. Here the later *ucs* were usually a better fit, because they used the method-types suggested by *TtP*, from which this research’s method-types were derived, because they used the same terminology. However, *Stoke Study*,³ the

¹ Both the aggregated-method-type bias, and the applied-method.

² This figure is repeated as *Figure 7.17*.

³ Which almost seems like a partial study, for all that it calls itself a full *ucs* (this is further reflected upon in chapter 8).

London 2000 Study,⁴ and the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study⁵ do not fit the method-types well.

Amongst the earlier *ucs* (pre-2000 *TtP* advice) there is also a range of fit. This is largely related to whether *TtP* drew on the particular *ucs* to build up their own method-types, as was the case with North West Study Manual, the Hertfordshire Study and the North East Arup Study for example.⁶ Here the fit is usually better.

Moreover, some of this research's method-types have been developed from the *ucs*, rather than *TtP* e.g. Technical-Modelling method-type, and consequently, the *ucs* from which these have been derived unsurprisingly fit the category well.

The fit also related to the intention of the *ucs*. For example, the Halton Study⁷ and the Leicestershire/Leicester Study focused on employment issues as well as housing issues and the need to accommodate both. The East Midlands Study Manual focused on providing advice on *uc* as an issue, and how the issue should be considered in the region, rather than on assessing the amount of capacity available, or simply producing a method.⁸ These variations in purpose made the fit of the *ucs* applied-methods less good.

The fit also related to how the *ucs* was written. Some *ucs* were written as summations, primarily offering and commenting on their findings, e.g. the London 2000 Study and the Avon Study, whilst others were written as technical reports, or working papers, and presented their method more overtly, e.g. the Wychavon Study, the South West Study, the Cambridge Study. These more overt methods were usually easier to place in relation to this research's method-types.

Within the rest of this analysis, the research has relied more upon those *ucs* which demonstrated relatively good fit to the method-types, except where it is trying to express a point related to the poor fit of the applied-method to the method-type.

⁴ Which came out just prior to *TtP*-London 2000 Study came out in September 2000, and *TtP* was produced in December of the same year.

⁵ This was commissioned just prior to *TtP* (in October 2000) and built on the commissioned company's previous brownfield survey work. It took a very different approach to calculating *uc* but it highlighted *TtP*'s advice as an update in chapter 11 (p.51-67).

⁶ For example London SRQ Study and North West Study and the Hertfordshire Study are drawn on quite heavily to develop the Design-Led method-type, and the South West Study is used to exemplify the Typical-Urban-Area method-type.

⁷ Halton Study reflected on employment issues in 3 chapters: chapter 2; 6 and 8 before determining their overall capacity assessment in chapter 9.

⁸ A method is provided in Annex C of the East Midland Study Manual.

Figure 7.1 Table to show the different Method-Types used by the different studies (ordered chronologically)

Study	Date	Survey stage					Yield-Assessment stage				Constraints-Consideration stage						
		Existing-Data	Typical-Urban-Areas	Priority-Area: Natural-Dynamic	Priority-Areas: Imposed-Dynamic	Total-Coverage-Survey	Density Multipliers	Design-Led	Yardstick	Yield-Trends	Discounting	Levels-of-Difficulty	Scoring-Matrices	Focus-Group/ Perception-Survey	Technical-Modelling	Constraints-Discussion	Constraint-Trends
Wychavon Study	06/02																
Hart Study	02/02																
South Hams Study	11/01																
Avon Study	08/01																
NE NL Study	04/01																
Stoke Study	?/01																
London 2000 Study	09/00																
Sheffield Study	05/00																
South West Study	01/99																
Wolverhampton Study	?/98																
Cambridge Study	12/98																
EM Study Manual	11/98																
ST Brownfield Study	?/98																
Yorkshire & Humber Study	07/98																
London SRQ Study	?/98																
North East Arup Study	1/98																
North West Study Manual	1998																
Halton Study	07/97																
Leicester(shire)Study	08/96																
West Sussex Study	06/96																
Hertfordshire Study	10/95																
London 1994 Study	1994																

KEY

EM Study Manual is the East Midland Study Manual NE NL Study is the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study

Leicester(shire) Study is the Leicestershire/Leicester Study

Horizontal line between London Study and Stoke Study depicts publication of *TtP*

7.3 The Inherent Bias of the Stages

The diagram *Figure 7.2* below demonstrates how the stages' functions and premises work together to reach a final assessment on the *uc* of a particular locality, and how these functions and premises relate to the conceptualisation of *uc* at each stage.

Figure 7.2 Stages' functions and premises explored against their relationship to the conceptualisation of uc to ascertain the stage bias

Stages	Function/Premise	Relationship of Stage to <i>Uc</i> Conceptualisations
Survey Stage	To discover and characterise (all) the development opportunities that are available or that are likely to become available for future housing development.	The Survey stage's function is one of discovery - therefore the stage should be seeking to widen out the development-opportunities included in the assessment of <i>uc</i> . Suggests the stage should have a natural bias towards the Opportunity Model of <i>uc</i> .
Yield-Assessment Stage	To calculate the likely housing yield of particular development-opportunities through a knowledge of the character of the development-opportunity, its location and possible policy considerations.	Yield-Assessment stage is designed to calculate the yield ⁹ of particular development-opportunities; and should maximise the possible yields. Therefore this stage focuses on the possible, not the actual. This indicates an extension to the thinking on <i>uc</i> not limited by constraints. Suggests the stage should have a natural bias towards the Opportunity Model.
(output from early stages) Theoretical Capacity/ Unconstrained Capacity	Premise for calculation: all development-opportunities (fully identified in stages 1 and 2) are fully realised to ascertain the capacity that is available if the options were carried through completely.	The assumption is that the first two stages maximised the considerations of the development-opportunities and policy options to reach a 'theoretical' figure. This implies the first two stages have a bias towards an unconstrained conceptualisation of <i>uc</i> (the Opportunity Model).
Constraint-Consideration Stage	There are constraints delaying and preventing the delivery of all the housing yield identified. This stage recognises, reflects and takes account of these constraints in the assessment.	This stage reflects on the constraints to development-identifying them and assessing their impact on the housing yields. This is reductive and suggests a bias towards the Constrained Model of <i>uc</i> .

⁹ In this research, yield relates to the amount of housing that is calculated as being achievable through the various development-opportunities. With regard to unconstrained capacity it reflects the calculation of the optimum amount of housing that can be achieved without taking into consideration the constraints. At the Constraint-Consideration stage it relates to the amount of housing that is calculated to be achievable taking into account the constraints as well.

The Survey Stage

As the Survey stage is designed to discover all the possible development-opportunities that could be available for future housing development, and given that the Survey stage is supposed to be a discovery stage, characterised by data collection and information gathering, it is reasonable to anticipate that the stage should be fairly open ended in its conceptualisation of *uc*. This suggests a bias towards this research's Opportunity Model.

The Yield-Assessment Stage

As already mentioned (section 6.3.2), *TtP* (p.23) suggested that this stage should maximise the yield from the identified development-opportunities at this stage, and that limiting influences that reduce this yield should be reserved for consideration for the Constraints-Consideration stage (*TtP* p.29). Furthermore *TtP* (p.23) suggested that *ucs* should move away from just looking at existing policy, and should include new considerations on the basis of the changes in *PPG3:2000*.¹⁰ If these suggestions are acknowledged, accepted, and applied, then they suggest that this stage should not adopt a constrained conceptualisation of *uc* at all. Therefore this stage too appears to favour the Opportunity Model.

Unconstrained Capacity (Theoretical Capacity/Unconstrained Potential)

The unconstrained capacity is not a stage, instead it is the result of the Survey and Yield-Assessment stages combined. It represents the maximum housing yield, achievable if all the development-opportunities are optimally developed. Therefore, effectively it is the numeric expression of the ultimate Opportunity Model position for that particular location. By definition, unconstrained capacity should not include any constraints, which would reduce the optimum yield. Nor, theoretically, should the methods used to determine the unconstrained capacity impose limitations on the ability of the study to find this optimum yield, as by default this would render the unconstrained capacity constrained. (see *TtP* p.29).

Working backwards from this, if, as is suggested, unconstrained capacity is truly unconstrained, then the finding of it, achieved by the Survey stage and the Yield-Assessment stage combined, must also be unconstrained. Therefore these two stages should have a bias, both individually and collectively, which relates to the Opportunity Model. This provides further support to the contention that the early stages of the *ucs* (the

¹⁰ These include changes in density parking and layout standards, and the introduction of minimum densities of 30 dw/ha rather than the previous practice of maximum densities often set at 25 dw/ha.

Survey and the Yield-Assessment stages) should demonstrate a bias towards unconstrained conceptualisations of *uc* (Opportunity Model).

However, this is not reflected in some studies; for example the West Sussex Study had a much narrower definition of theoretical capacity, defined as:

the combined capacity of all sites where residential intensification could take place according to the following criteria

West Sussex Study (1996), p.12

and then listed 5 constraints that should be considered as part of the process of calculating the theoretical figure. Here, then, the theoretical capacity was limited by pre-conceived ideas of certain constraints that could not be over-ridden, and the figures quoted as the theoretical capacity are expressions of this bounded optimum capacity. Therefore, instead of the idea of theoretical capacity being an expression of an open Opportunity Model conceptualisation of *uc*, in this West Sussex Study instance, theoretical capacity is a reflection of a closed notion of *uc*- or a Constrained Model conceptualisation of *uc*.

TtP (p.29) argued that such a construction so early in the calculation inevitably leads to limited considerations of unconstrained *uc* and noted that:

Authorities should resist the temptation to introduce discounting into the early stages of the process.

TtP (2000), p.29

This further endorses the point that the early stages of the *ucs* assessment method should include considerations which lend themselves to an *uc* concept biased toward the Opportunity Model, and that the constraining features of the development process should be reflected only in the later Constraint-Consideration stage.

However, the West Sussex Study example highlights the point that although the Survey and Yield-Assessment stages should reflect a bias towards the Opportunity Model, the possibility arises that such an understanding of these stages may not always be the case.

This example also highlights the method's ability to reflect a concept of *uc* within a particular study, at a particular stage, here the Survey and Yield-Assessment stages. As an example it begins to demonstrate, firstly, how the conceptualisation of *uc* is contained within the method-type through the premises on which the method-type rests; and, subsequently, that this conceptualisation is carried into the evaluation process through the applied-method, so that the final figures of the calculations are an expression of the conceptualisation of *uc*, be it towards an open notion of unconstrained opportunity (the

Opportunity Model), or towards a closed notion of constrained possibilities (the Constrained Model).

However, within each stage, different method-types have different biases regarding the 'Opportunity-Constrained' continuum and this more detailed analysis is described in the following sections.

The Constraints-Consideration Stage

This stage accounts for the hindrances preventing the development-opportunities from achieving their optimal yields. It is this final stage that recognises how imperfectly the development process functions, due to anomalies in market forces, development preferences, land constraints, and the environmental and social acceptability of development. Here this emphasis on the limits of development suggests a conceptual position of *uc* more in keeping with the bounded concept of the Constrained Model. Indeed, many of the same issues that are raised in the more bounded understanding of *uc* are translated into a method to evaluate how limiting they are within an *ucs* at this point (e.g. environmental capacity).

Summary of the biases of the different stages within an *ucs*

From the above discussion it can be seen that the anticipated biases of the different stages can be summarised as being

- Survey stage:- tending towards an Opportunity Model concept
- Yield-Assessment stage:- tending towards an Opportunity Model concept
- Constraints-Consideration stage:- tending towards a Constrained Model concept

However, with each stage, different method-types have different biases regarding the 'Opportunity-Constrained' continuum, and this more detailed analysis is described in the following sections.

7.4 The Analysis of the Survey Stage Method-Types

The Survey stage is important in itself and in how it relates to other parts of the *ucs*, because it influences what is and is not excluded from the *ucs*, and it determines how what is included is perceived, which also has implications beyond this stage. Here, at this early stage of the *ucs*, if the characterisation of a variable¹¹ excludes possible development-

¹¹ Urban-areas, development-opportunities, policy and constraints (see chapter 5 for fuller explanation).

opportunities, then they are excluded from the whole study.¹² Furthermore, how the applied-method at this stage characterises them, and how they are perceived to work together to determine the development-opportunity in the locality, also largely determine how these variables are treated in other stages of the *ucs*.

At the Survey stage, the main issue centres on how the urban-areas¹³ and the development-opportunities¹⁴ are treated and characterised. Here the urban-areas' and development-opportunities' characterisations, contained in their treatment, centre on the perception of their known ability to change, and the desirability of that change to occur. Here, changeability suggests changing to increase housing yield; this suggests thinking in keeping with the Opportunity Model. Alternatively, an inability to change suggests a bias toward the Constrained Model. This known changeability centres on, firstly, the presumption of the limits and limitations of pre-existing knowledge; secondly, how the information for particular area and source characterisations is expressed; thirdly, the emphasis on homogeneous or heterogeneous characteristics and their perceived stability; and fourthly, the assumed predictability of what is (un)known.

7.4.1 The Presumption of the Limits and Limitations of Pre-Existing Knowledge

Different Survey method-types assume different levels of adequacy, when considering pre-existing information, and ascribe differing levels of reliability to that information. At one extreme the Existing-Data method-type¹⁵ assumes existing information is adequately complete and reliable. This assumption underpins the perception that an *ucs* can limit its investigation to pre-existing known data. This perception creates the conditions that allow *ucs* to maintain their existing understanding of urban-areas unchallenged, actually preventing urban-areas and development-opportunities from being characterised in other ways. Effectively, then, this method-type limits the way urban-areas and development-opportunities can be characterised to the previous ways they have been characterised, and *uc* considerations to pre-existing understandings, and to projections of past outcomes, based on past conditions in those particular locations.

Yet the pre-existing data was originally collected with regard to other activities and issues, not for the completion of an *ucs*, and often related to the locality's land-availability-

¹² This is further considered in the analysis of the aggregated-methods, and in chapter 8.

¹³ This also links into coverage, which is discussed in greater detail in section 8.2.

¹⁴ This also links into the discussion of the development-opportunities in section 8.3.

¹⁵ Described in chapter 6.

study,¹⁶ which pre-dated a required *ucs*.¹⁷ Consequently, the pre-existing data assumptions and characterisations may not relate well to *ucs* intentions. In some instances where existing data has been used, it has been re-formatted, (e.g. London 1994 Study,¹⁸ North East Arup Study¹⁹ with regard to development-opportunities), but this does not change the collected base data. Therefore, urban-areas and development-opportunities continued being characterised as they always have been, and the pre-existing limitations remain largely unexplored. The re-formatting of the data does indicate the gaps²⁰ and inconsistencies²¹ in the material, but it does not challenge these discrepancies; instead the applied-method finds ways to overcome them. In the case of the South West Study,²² this was by highlighting the discrepancy in the data-sets relating to area characteristics.²³ In the case of the North East Arup Study (p.13), this was done by extrapolating data found in one authority's area to other authorities' areas where the gaps in the development-opportunities data emerged.

This suggests a fairly reductive view of the unique characteristics of particular localities and development-opportunities, and in practice does not extend thinking in terms of rethinking the particular issue(s); but instead reasserts the pre-existing characterisations determined from other areas. Effectively, then, only using existing data as a basis for assessing *uc* constrains perceptions to pre-conceived characterisations of urban-areas and development-opportunities, and consequently limits the conceptualisation of *uc*, i.e. the Constrained Model.

In contrast, the Total-Coverage-Survey method-type implies an assumption that pre-existing information is likely to be unreliable and incomplete. This is partly due to information being gathered for other purposes. However, in practice it is also due to,

¹⁶ Here it should be noted that the change in requirement from the completion of a land-availability-study to an *ucs* came about because of the perceived shortcomings of the land-availability-study (see chapter 2).

¹⁷ Here a distinction is being made between optional *ucs* not required by *PPG3:1992* (i.e studies carried out prior to 1999/2000 and required *ucs*- anticipated in the *PPG3:(Draft)* and required in the final version of *PPG3:2000*.

¹⁸ In the London 1994 Study (p.8) Phase 1 was the gathering of data from the various boroughs. This included the boroughs filling out survey questionnaires, and a telephone survey to verify results, discover problems, and chase up late returns.

¹⁹ The formatting of data and data collection was discussed with authorities as 'Stage 1' of the North East Arup Study (p.2).

²⁰ See North East Arup Study (p.13).

²¹ See South West Study on the inconsistency of the development-opportunities of information- particularly 2.8-2.10 (p.6-7) and 2.13 (p.9).

²² The South West Study starts by looking at existing data from a number of surveys but goes on to develop a Typical-Urban-Area method-type.

²³ For example: areas with a population over 5,000 and areas with a population over 10,000 (2.8 p.6).

firstly, the dynamic nature of the development process; and secondly, the practitioners' willingness to accept the notion of reconsidering policies to include new development-opportunities, and to consider urban-areas in new ways.

This latter point suggests a recasting of the understanding of policy from that of regulating land-uses, to that of a more spatially related policy formation focusing on real places (urban areas, and specific sites) with actual characteristics. It also suggests a recasting of the *ucs*' role, from providing evidence to support the arguments of pre-existing policy, which remain unchallenged, to investigating alternatives prior to determining policy, and supporting the subsequently formulated policy on the strength of those findings.²⁴

Therefore the survey method's ability to accommodate change provides for the possibility that urban-areas and development-opportunities need re-consideration, re-definition and re-characterisation, as pre-existing perceptions become *passé* and inadequate due to planning and development changes. This can be seen in South Tyneside's 2003 Study (Consultation Draft) (see chapter 9) where a new total-coverage-survey found sites previously unknown, and inaccuracies in existing information emerged,²⁵ and where new sites have become available during the *ucs* process.²⁶ It can also be seen in the wider breadth of development-opportunities being considered in studies such as the Sheffield Study, South Hams Study, etc. (see chapter 8).

7.4.2 *The Expression of Information*

The variables are also characterised through the way the data is expressed. In some survey method-types, notably Existing-Data²⁷ and Typical-Urban-Area,²⁸ much, if not all, of the information pertaining to the identified urban-area(s) and development-opportunities is expressed in numeric or statistical formats, and some development-opportunities are

²⁴ This difference in approach has been noted in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.L-D 10).

²⁵ For example in completing its survey South Tyneside 2003 Study found discrepancies in the existing site data, partly due to its age, partly due to its formatting, and partly due to the fact that sites changed their status even as the survey is being completed, e.g. a site may gain planning permission, or an industry may suddenly close (minutes of meeting with STMBC 02/10/02).

²⁶ For example a number of industrial sites closed and permission was sought for residential development during the period the South Tyneside 2003 Study (Consultation Draft) took to complete. (KB interview 03/03). These were unanticipated as a likely housing development-opportunity in the UDP or in the minds of the planners prior to its unexpected planning application.

²⁷ See the Cambridge Study (p.5-12)- use of existing trends data, London 1994 Study (p.57-64) - statistical data, requested and gathered from boroughs. North East Arup Study (p.2-3) statistical data requested and gathered from district and metropolitan authorities.

²⁸ See the West Sussex Study (Table 1.3.3), the South West Study (Appendix 2), the Yorkshire and Humber Study (Appendix 1)- typical-urban-areas characterised using physical and land-use data and this becomes expressed in statistical terms which can then be applied to other areas of a similar type. The East Midlands Study Manual- exception uses socio-economic data as well to characterise areas (p.9) Annex C.

always treated in numeric or statistical formats.²⁹ These formats are, firstly, reductive in their characterisation of urban-areas and development-opportunities. This can be seen in the way that the applied-method concentrates on the quantitative rather than the qualitative, and attempts to synthesise the more qualitative characteristics into quantitative information. This is amply demonstrated in this research's example of North East Arup Study (p.6),³⁰ where urban-areas and development-opportunities have been characterised using Existing-Data and synthesised by the use of Density-Multipliers into numeric formulae, which can then be applied generally. Hence, figures represent housing types; family housing, executive housing, and locations, and assumptions of the stability of each of these types.

Secondly, these applied-methods' formats have a tendency to emphasise the general over the particular: the category, the type, the trend (see the Cambridge Study p.15) rather than specific sites or one-offs. Indeed, on the strength of contributing to the completion of both the South West Study and the Yorkshire and Humber Study,³¹ Barton suggested that the emphasis on the general rather than the particular was more, not less, reliable, because a proportion of an identified development-opportunity, or of an identified urban-area type, would certainly come forward for development, but the site-by-site specifics of which sites these would be were very uncertain.³²

Thirdly, these formats tend to rely heavily on maintaining existing policies and contexts in which the urban-areas and development-opportunities are found. For example, Existing-Data method-type tends to extrapolate or project historic trends forward (e.g. the Cambridge Study p.15). This effectively presupposes that the historic conditions will continue unchanged³³ and thus depicts development-opportunities and urban-areas as unchanging and perhaps even as unchangeable.³⁴

²⁹ The development-opportunities which rely on yardsticks method-type at the Yield-Assessment stage- i.e. buildings rather than sites, see yardsticks for fuller explanation (section 6.5.3).

³⁰ See table 2.2 (p.6) of North East Arup Study and *Figure 7.4* of this thesis for a fuller description and discussion of this example.

³¹ These are both *ucs* which use a detailed Typical-Urban-Area method-type.

³² Said at a one-day short course 'Urban Capacity' organised by UWE, Bristol, 1/12/00.

³³ A point first made in *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.L-D 11).

³⁴ Some Typical-Urban-Areas are later used with some changes in assumption over what might become available, see the Yorkshire and Humber Study Appendix 5 (no page number), but this is a statistical assumption not always well linked to policy or other conditions which indicate why these changes in assumption can be made.

As a method-type, Typical-Urban-Area also tends to rely on the more stable characteristics of the typical areas -their physical characteristics-³⁵ and accepts as un-altering (and perhaps unalterable) the policy component of particular urban-area types- that is the land-use designation.³⁶ Consequently these method-types when applied have a tendency to portray urban-areas, development-opportunities, and policy with an emphasis on these variables' limited ability to change. This emphasis on constraint, regulatory policy and the maintenance of the status quo suggests the Constrained Model's conceptualisation of *uc*.

Taken together, these reflect, perhaps unwittingly, a method-type assumption of an inability or undesirability of particular areas and development-opportunities to change as one of the more dominant features of their characterisation. This is inherent in the applied-method's assumptions of the character and behaviour of urban-areas and development-opportunities, forced by the way the method-type expresses these characteristics, rather than the character and behaviour of the actual urban-areas and development-opportunities. It reflects a Constrained Model's conceptualisation of *uc*.

In contrast to the method-types that depict urban-areas and development-opportunities through numeric expressions, the other method-types³⁷ rely more on individual site observation.³⁸ In these cases, the characteristics are not synthesised into formulae or statistics, and are not extrapolated to reflect other local areas or sites.³⁹ Instead the characteristics are kept more intact, depicted as they are found: measurements, physical features, location in relation to modes of transport and other local activities, and qualitative

³⁵ This was first noted by Llewelyn-Davies in the appendix of *Housing and Urban Capacity* and is portrayed as being an erroneous presupposition (p.L-D 11). The exception to this would appear to be East Midlands Study Manual which encourages the inclusion of the more dynamic socio-economic characteristics in the characterisation of urban-areas. (See p.9 of Annex C of East Midlands Study Manual).

³⁶ The West Sussex Study (Table 3.1.1) would be an example where designations have largely been accepted and unexplored. However, it should also be noted that many Typical-Urban-Area methods do try to accommodate areas currently pre-dominantly given over to other uses, e.g. the Yorkshire and Humber has Typical-Urban-Area types for employment uses E15-19, other uses OU20-26 and community uses C27-29, which suggests an acceptance of the possibility that the areas' uses might change to accommodate additional housing. This having been said, its treatment of, for example, employment land: par 4.16- 4.17 p. 21-22 and Appendix 5 (no page number) suggests that, whilst a 'more radical' approach might have been taken in many instances, 'no change' has ultimately been assumed to be the correct treatment of these development-opportunities, due to the lack of reliable information and the limited remit of the study's authorising authority.

³⁷ Priority Areas method-types, both – Natural Dynamic and – Imposed Dynamic, and the Total-Coverage-Survey method-types.

³⁸ E.g. South Tyneside Study 2003, (a Total-Coverage-Survey method-type) visited 391 sites, to survey their particular characteristics and ascertain their individual suitability for housing, and the North West Study Manual (a Priority-Areas method-type) advised that sites should be visited, and site characteristics should be considered in the interface zones (North West Study Manual p.35).

³⁹ Many of the building related development-opportunities do not necessarily lend themselves to being individually surveyed and are treated differently in an *ucs*- see the discussion on yardsticks (section 6.5.3).

criteria. This way of depicting urban-areas and development-opportunities is more able to emphasise the spatial rather than the a-spatial, the specific rather than the general, and the difference rather than the similarity.⁴⁰ It allows a more varied approach to be taken which appears to favour a more open interpretation of urban-areas and development-opportunities at this stage, and enables a more flexible approach to policy and constraint considerations at other stages, reflecting a more open understanding of the concept of *uc* (the Opportunity Model).

7.4.3 *The Emphasis on Homogeneous or Heterogeneous Characteristics*

A further difference in characterisation visible in the survey stage method-types is the depiction of the urban-areas and development-opportunities either as homogeneous or heterogeneous. Again, Existing-Data and Typical-Urban-Area method-types draw on the similar and the settled, whilst in contrast Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic and Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic method-types draw on the specific and the dynamic. The Total-Coverage-Survey method-type may not actually draw on the heterogeneity of particular urban-areas, development-opportunities or sites, but it does allow for diversity and anticipates the need to accommodate it.

The very word 'typical' in the name Typical-Urban-Area reflects this method-type's emphasis on the similar. It focuses on the 80% of the known area to have homogeneous characteristics, emphasising the traditional characterisation of city areas as homogeneous socio-economic land-use zones, clearly differentiated from other zone types, and implying a preference for the maintenance of stability within zones over the possibility for change (Burgess:1925).⁴¹ This effectively encourages the maintenance of the existing *status quo* within these areas, and as *TtP* indicated, restricts the *ucs*' ability to consider heterogeneous areas. However, here most Typical-Urban-Area applied-methods do include some mixed-use areas as one or more of their categorised area types,⁴² but then treat them as homogeneous areas rather than heterogeneous ones.

⁴⁰ Barton indicated that he thought that the general was more reliable than the specific, given that any particular site might or might not develop (with high levels of uncertainty attributed to every individual site's propensity for development), but that a proportion of the total would develop even if the exact sites remained unknown. (This was articulated at a one-day short course 'Urban Capacity' organised by UWE, Bristol, 1/12/00).

⁴¹ Burgess depicts residential zones (zone IV) as 'restricted residential zones', 'bright light area', 'residential hotels', 'apartment-houses', 'single family dwellings' (chart II p.55), as moral, settled, organised and aspired to- 'the promised land' (p.56). He depicts 'zones of transition' (zone II) as 'the zone of deterioration', 'essentially one of decay, of stationary or declining population but also (as zones) of regeneration' (Burgess in Park et al:1925, p.58).

⁴² See for example the West Sussex Study Table 1.3.3: A1, A2 and F1-F8 typical-urban-area categories, and the Yorkshire and Humber Study p.12: MU10-MU14 categories).

In contrast, Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic and Priority-Areas:Policy-Dynamic look for the heterogeneity of the areas, and consequently they concentrate on the 20% of the area most likely to change. In the terminology of *TtP* p.20 these areas are ‘transitional areas,’ echoing the phraseology of Burgess:1925 (p.56), and in the terminology of Rudlin (1998 p.20) they are ‘shatterzones’ depicting the splintering relationships between land-uses, whilst for Llewelyn-Davies they are ‘interface zones’ (North West Study Manual p.29), denoting the geographical, and perhaps spatial, point of meeting between more homogeneous land-use areas. In London SRQ Study these areas are characterised as ‘awkward, mixed transitional areas’ extensively found in ‘the older urban areas’ declining employment areas and regeneration areas’ (London SRQ Study p.29), again suggesting the deterioration identified in Burgess’ characterisation of transitional zones (Burgess:1925 p.56) and reflected in Rudlin’s ‘shatterzones’.

The Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic method-type implies a natural change, in keeping with Burgess’ observations of succession, concentration and de-concentration (Burgess:1925 p.52) as people and land-uses find their place in the city. The Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic method-type goes beyond Burgess’ observations⁴³ to consider the exploitability of these perceived natural fluctuations to produce additional development-opportunities.

In contrast the Priority-Areas:Policy-Dynamic goes further still, suggesting that policy can be geared to impose change. This might be for sustainable reasons (The Wolverhampton Study’s Sustainable Principles); or for regeneration reasons (e.g. The East Midlands Study Manual’s⁴⁴ 5 approaches to urban renewal (p.34-35); or for any other reason deemed suitable by the producers of the *ucs*. In these method-types the identified urban-areas and the development-opportunities are all characterised as changeable, indeed perhaps in need of change; and in some instances policy defined again with an emphasis on change, e.g. London SRQ Study with its ‘*ped-sheds*’ and Priority-Areas linked to reduced parking and car-free housing.⁴⁵

In the characterisation of the Priority-Area method-type, the areas themselves are depicted as difficult to characterise, with an emphasis on the sites’ and development-opportunities’ individuality, and their context (policy and constraints) changeable. The method-types

⁴³The case that practitioners carrying out *ucs* are necessarily aware of Burgess’ considerations of city development and interactions, is not being presented here, just that these links can be made.

⁴⁴ The East Midland Study Manual appears to be an *ucs* which advocates both Typical-Urban-Area method-types and Priority Area method-types. Consequently, it has been used to exemplify both types of survey method-type where it was thought appropriate.

⁴⁵ London SRQ Study (p.25-30) for *ped-sheds*, Annex 1 for car-free housing.

also assumed change: changing site-opportunities, changing development-opportunities, changing area dynamics, changing policy positions, presented through the necessity to visit sites to evaluate the possibilities, and to ensure the availability of relevant information necessary to complete other *ucs* stages. This emphasis on site-by-site, area-by-area analysis also maintains the link between physical areas and policy relating to them, and strengthens spatial policy formation over a-spatial land-use regulation.

7.4.4 The Assumed Predictability of what is (Un)Known

The more numeric method-types also appear to credit urban-areas and development-opportunities as more predictable than the more qualitative method-types. This is expressed through their readiness to extrapolate information to fill gaps; either because these gaps become apparent, e.g. North East Arup Study p.13 (previously discussed); or because this is an anticipated part of the method-type, e.g. the Typical-Urban-Area method-type has the built-in extrapolation of each typical-urban-area's findings to other areas of the same type. In these method-types the urban-areas and development-opportunities, through method-type necessity, are characterised as unchanging, and the relating policies are presented as given, emphasising their regulatory nature. This emphasis accords more closely with the Constrained Model of *uc*.

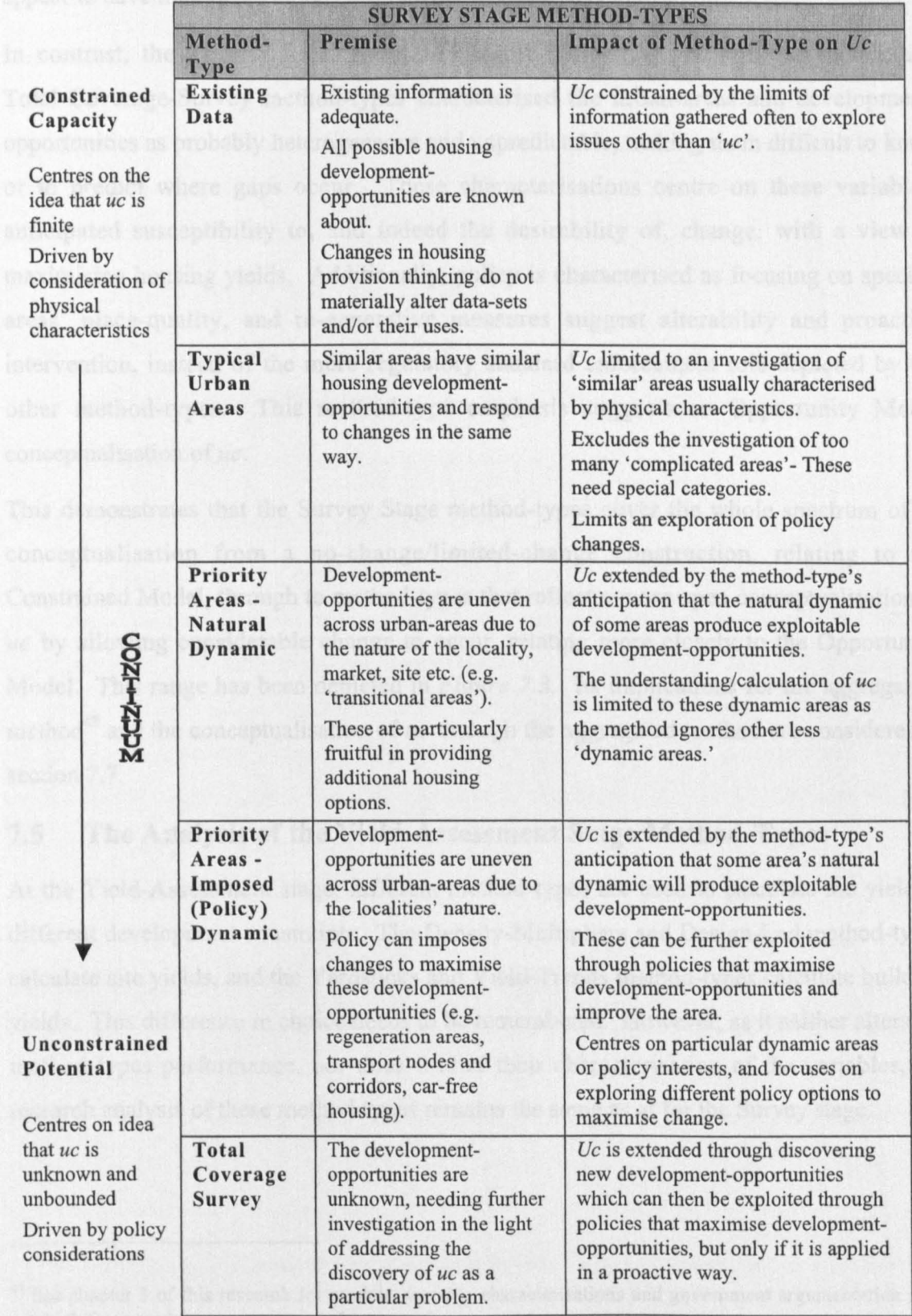
In contrast, the other method-types' emphasis accords with the Opportunity Model; here the method-types focus upon unique characteristics of specific sites, noting the need to consider the 'one-off development-opportunity' (North West Study Manual p.30), and the unpredictability of particular opportunities and areas. Indeed, the implied assumption of the method-types in later stages is that policy should be utilised to generate these one-off development-opportunities, that new policies will be applied to sites located in particular locations ('*ped-sheds*', priority areas in London SRQ Study p.21 and 'focus locations' in North West Study Manual p.16), particular renewal areas in East Midlands Study Manual (Annex C p.3).⁴⁶ Consequently, policy is depicted as changeable and proactive, rather than fixed and regulatory, and areas, sites and development-opportunities are characterised as unpredictable.

⁴⁶ Suggests that a 'more interventionist approach' may be necessary and p.34-35 in the main body of the text explores the different renewal options that might be used.

7.4.5 The Apparent Range of Method-Type Bias to be found at the Survey

Stage

Figure 7.3 Survey Method-Types' premises explored against their impact on ascertaining uc and compared against a constraint continuum ranging from very constrained through to totally unconstrained



The above analysis demonstrates that some method-types, particularly the Existing-Data method-type and Typical-Urban-Area method-type, have resulted in a depiction of the urban-areas and development-opportunities as known, homogeneous and predictable, and of policy as unchanging, regulatory and in need of enforcement. Such characterisations appear to have their place in the Constrained Model conceptualisation.⁴⁷

In contrast, the Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic, Priority-Areas:Policy-Dynamic and Total-Coverage-Survey method-types characterised the urban-areas and development-opportunities as probably heterogeneous and unpredictable, making them difficult to know or to predict where gaps occur. These characterisations centre on these variables' anticipated susceptibility to, and indeed the desirability of, change, with a view to maximising housing yields. Additionally, policy is characterised as focusing on specific areas' place-quality, and re-generative measures suggest alterability and proactive intervention, instead of the more regulatory standard enforcement role depicted by the other method-types. This method-type emphasis suggests an Opportunity Model conceptualisation of *uc*.

This demonstrates that the Survey Stage method-types cover the whole spectrum of *uc* conceptualisation from a no-change/limited-change construction, relating to the Constrained Model, through to method-types that reflect a more open conceptualisation of *uc* by allowing considerable change to occur, relating more closely to the Opportunity Model. This range has been depicted in *Figure 7.3*. Its implications for the aggregated-method⁴⁸ and the conceptualisation of *uc* through the aggregated-method are considered in section 7.7.

7.5 The Analysis of the Yield-Assessment Stage Method-Types

At the Yield-Assessment stage, different method-types are used to calculate the yield of different development constraints. The Density-Multipliers and Design-Led method-types calculate site yields, and the Yardsticks and Yield-Trends method-types calculate building yields. This difference in choice needs to be remembered. However, as it neither alters the method-types performance, nor does it alter their characterisation of the variables, the research analysis of these method-types remains the same as at for the Survey stage.

⁴⁷ See chapter 3 of this research for models, variable characterisations and government argumentation from which these models were constructed.

⁴⁸ Both the aggregated-method-type and the applied-aggregated-method.

At the Yield-Assessment stage, the emphasis is on how policy relates to the development-opportunities, and therefore for this research how the method-types characterise policy at this stage is particularly important. Here the method-types relate back to the Survey stage characterisations of the development opportunities and urban areas,⁴⁹ and set the content of what can be considered at the Constraints-Consideration stage.

The way policy is characterised links to the perception of its function and flexibility, relating to its ability and desirability to change. Here, as above, the assumption was that if policy was changeable (flexible), housing yields would be maximised (the Opportunity Model), and if not, then housing yields would be constrained (the Constrained Model). The characterisation of policy to depict its flexibility centres on:

- the presumption of the function of policy;
- the connectivity of policy to actual locations;
- the differing spatiality of policy;
- the emphasis of policy on environment or housing.

7.5.1 The Presumption of the Function of Policy

The perception of policy's flexibility seems linked to the underpinning presumption of the function of policy. In some *ucs*, e.g. the West Sussex Study, the emphasis is regulatory, depicting policy as relatively static, either because it is intrinsically difficult to change or because to change it is undesirable. Most *ucs* using Density-Multipliers applied-methods adopt this presumption. These *ucs* take the existing policies as they are expressed (usually in development plans, and building standards), and treat them as givens, standards or absolutes. They are then portrayed as the existing situation⁵⁰ which needs to be enforced (e.g. the West Sussex Study p.7-9).

In this method-type (Density-Multipliers), where the applied-method has been used to calculate beyond the existing standards and policies, they have become tenuously attached to policy-thinking and consequently very speculative. For example, South Tyneside's Brownfield Survey calculated a range of density options;⁵¹ however, despite these calculations being linked to specific sites, the changes in policy necessary to achieve these

⁴⁹ Both individually, i.e. particular sites or particular buildings, and collectively as a development-opportunity type, e.g. residential conversions, LOTS, etc.

⁵⁰ What Llewellyn-Davies terms the 'status quo' (North West Study Manual p.41-42).

⁵¹ South Tyneside's density options 25 dw/ha – 40 dw/ha (no page numbers).

higher densities remained unconsidered. Therefore these calculations are not really based on the notion of changing policy, but instead are used to validate the existing policy.

In contrast the Design-Led method-type uses existing policy as a starting point. For example, the North West Study Manual (p.41-42) and the London SRQ Study (p.28) use it as one out of three policy scenarios depicted through design options. Here the other options present more relaxed policies and standards.⁵² In these *ucs*, policy appears less reactive and regulatory, focusing on constraining development-opportunities and protecting against 'town cramming' (see for example The West Sussex Study p.1),⁵³ and is more about intentional, proactive policy-making aimed at maximising development-opportunities in urban-areas. A presumption is that policy should at least be tested with a view to change⁵⁴ and, perhaps, with a view to pursuing quite different policies.⁵⁵

Therefore the Design-Led method-type favours a more proactive regenerative policy position, relating more closely to the Opportunity Model position, and the Density-Multipliers method-type a more regulatory one, the Constrained Model.

However, here the application of these method-types proved significant. This is well demonstrated by the North West Study Manual applied-method.⁵⁶ Here a number of 'shire' counties initially⁵⁷ did not explore any other policy options besides the existing scenario option,⁵⁸ effectively adopting a regulatory approach to policy. Meanwhile, as part of the same regional initiative, the metropolitan authorities in the North West Region were applying all the scenarios, effectively investigating the impact of policy changes, implicitly endorsing the notion of flexible policy, and the need to challenge it.⁵⁹ Therefore some authorities applied this method-type emphasising regulation whilst others emphasised pro-development policy.

The Yardsticks method-types tend to represent a shift in designation policy: with buildings changing use (office/warehouse conversion), and/or in standards: densities, sub-division or conversion of residential property, relaxed parking standards, etc. They may also reflect a

⁵² I.e. increased density standards, reduced car-parking provision etc.

⁵³ A stance which relates better to this research's Constrained Model concept of *uc*.

⁵⁴ E.g. changes in standards: parking and density in particular linked to different policy scenarios North West Study Manual (p.42-45).

⁵⁵ For example London SRQ Study's consideration of the feasibility of car-free housing (London SRQ Study Annex 1).

⁵⁶ A design-led method type.

⁵⁷ I.e. in 1999.

⁵⁸ North West planner- telephone conversation 15/3/2000.

⁵⁹ A stance that relates better to this research's Opportunity Model.

shift in proactive funding/policy arrangements, with new funding being made available, e.g. the recent relaxation in VAT collection for LOTS development (UTF p.255, introduced in 2001 budget). Therefore the use of yardsticks appears to suggest an acceptance of changing policy reflective of the Opportunity Model.

The difference in the depiction of policy through these method-types has been identified as a critical turning-point in the way *uc* itself is understood (see *Housing and Urban Capacity* p.L-D 22). Where this turning-point occurs, *Housing and Urban Capacity* (p.7-8) advocated the second understanding of the function of policy -the proactive favouring of development (i.e. the Opportunity Model), not the first- the regulatory role (i.e. the Constrained Model).⁶⁰

This report also highlighted the policy production process in which *ucs* take their place. In 1997, the time of this report, the *ucs* was primarily a supporting technical document, completed near the end of the policy process as EIP evidence, ratifying a particular development plan (often the UDP or structure plan).⁶¹ The *ucs* justified the advocated policies, demonstrating their validity as given, in the context of their appropriateness to the locality. However, since 1997, partly due to *Housing and Urban Capacity's* recommendations,⁶² a shift in thinking has occurred. The *ucs* is still a quasi-technical document used to support the advocated policies of a development plan at an EIP. However, its production has become a required, rather than a voluntary, exercise (PPG3:2000 par.24-27), and it has also been argued that *ucs* should be completed earlier in the policy process, when policies are still being reconsidered and challenged. Moreover, *Housing and Urban Capacity* also recommended that *ucs* should explore policy options⁶³ to support policy through demonstrating a rigorous testing of the options, and subsequently make a choice of policy on the strength of this.

Therefore the Yield-Assessment method-types characterise the function of policy as either a regulatory standard that needs enforcement (e.g. Typical-Urban-Areas), more reflective of the Constrained Model; or as proactive policies anticipating changing situations and encouraging housing development, in closer proximity to the Opportunity Model.

⁶⁰ Evidenced by the report's unfavourable highlighting of policy that had been adopted and applied without being challenged in some *ucs* yield-assessment method-types (p.L-D 23), and its advocacy of the use of method-types that were more explorative and illuminating in policy terms (p.L-D 22).

⁶¹ At this point in time *ucs* were a voluntary addition to any evidence that was being completed and did not have to be carried out or presented.

⁶² Which viewed this use of the *ucs* as somewhat circular (p.L-D 10).

⁶³ I.e. not simply apply pre-determined policies.

7.5.2 *The Connection between Policy and Actual Locations*

Differing Yield-Assessment method-types allow differing levels of connection between policy positions and real locations. This results in the method-types having differing abilities to explore policy.

The Design-Led method-type relies on designs generated through policy scenarios. In these, policies are connected to particular urban-areas with their incumbent characterisations (reflected in the policy scenarios that are applied, e.g. North West Study Manual p.4-6) and to particular site characteristics based on the anticipated site-based data gathered in the Survey stage.⁶⁴ Therefore the Design-Led method-type has an inherent ability to connect policy with actual locations and characterises policy and site characteristics as linked.

In contrast, Density-Multipliers method-types can be calculated with no reference to actual sites⁶⁵ and with no regard for site characteristics.⁶⁶ They can also be calculated technically, with no reference to policy, although, in practice, the densities that are chosen do draw on some policy discussion,⁶⁷ primarily for validating the chosen density levels.

For example, both North East Arup Study⁶⁸ and South Tyneside Brownfield Study draw on Llewelyn-Davies:1994⁶⁹ to validate their consideration of higher densities, and South Tyneside Brownfield Study (no page number) also drew on Barton:1995 to validate their choice of 40-50 dw/ha as the sustainable option. These policies were not chosen in relation to the local character or particular site characteristics, although North East Arup Study did indicate a number of key policy considerations related to particular site characteristics e.g.:

... the existing densities and character of the areas and the need to avoid town cramming ...

North East Arup Study (1998), p.6

⁶⁴ Design-Led method-types are described and discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

⁶⁵ For example the North East Arup Study applies them to local authority statistical data not formatted in relation to any site specificity, but as later examples show the study does try to take into consideration some un-located (or dislocated) site characteristics through formulaic calculations.

⁶⁶ For example South Tyneside Brownfield Study applies them to sites in the same way regardless of the sites' location or characteristics.

⁶⁷ Often less than a page, many adopting *PPG3:2000*'s suggested densities e.g. South Hams Study (p.3) in a single paragraph indicated that it looked at 'low, medium, and high densities (30, 40 and 50 dwellings per hectare respectively) in line with the development standards set out in *PPG3:[2000]*'.

⁶⁸ North East Arup Study (p.5-6).

⁶⁹ Llewelyn-Davies and SAUS:1994, cited in South Tyneside's Brownfield Study (no page number) and cited more fully on p.6 of North East Arup Study.

but even here the application of these apparently location-specific policy characteristics⁷⁰ demonstrated an abstracted formulaic use of the data (sometimes extrapolated from other data),⁷¹ not really attached to specific sites or locations, making the policy connection to location rather tentative.

As the connection between policy and location varies amongst the different method-types they have differing abilities to characterise policy as flexible. In the case of the Density-Multipliers applied-method, where it reflects beyond existing density standards (i.e. by using other density multipliers), the *ucs* usually use policy taken from elsewhere to validate the change in thinking. This creates the situation whereby policy is used to validate density-multipliers, rather than density-multipliers being used to scrutinise policy. This hinders the *ucs*' investigative ability to explore the impact of different policy changes. Furthermore, *ucs* using this method-type often do not reflect on the appropriateness of these adopted validating policies for their specific circumstances. Instead, they effectively take these policy stances as alternative givens, which can be applied without considering the implications for actual localities: i.e. real urban-areas and sites are seldom reflected upon in real site/locality terms.⁷² Therefore the disconnection of policy from locality in the Density-Multipliers method-type results in policy being depicted as inflexible. Moreover, where alternatives are tried (i.e. other density-multipliers) their true impact on sites and

⁷⁰ It should be noted here that if the Design-Led policy scenarios of the North West Study Manual (p.41-45) are compared to the policies outlined in North East Arup Study (p.5) and the subsequent Density-Multipliers calculations (p.6) they do not appear radically different. The North East Arup Study includes:

- (i) the consideration of housing market conditions;
- (ii) existing density and character. (Here there is a parting of company with the North West Study Manual offering different density in designed scenarios thought to have taken account of the area's character);
- (iii) sustainable development criteria, which reduces down (methodologically) to mean proximity to town centres and transport corridors (reflected in the North West Study Manual's '*ped-sheds*');
- (iv) prospect of regeneration initiatives and public funding (reflected in the North West's Study's '*ped-sheds*' and '*focus locations*');
- (v) a more flexible approach to car parking standards to encourage developers to provide a lower number of spaces in development schemes in those areas accessible to public transport reflected in the North West Study Manual's Scenario 2 and Scenario 3.

However the point here is that the Design-Led method-type of the North West Study Manual anticipates the use of actual locations (sites) and the Density-Multipliers applied-method of the North East Arup Study circumvents the need to use actual sites through formulaic constructions of policy, urban-areas and site characteristics.

⁷¹ North East Arup Study (p.2).

⁷² South Tyneside does apply density-multipliers to sites on a site by site basis, but these calculations do not take into account any of the necessary policies that would need to be pursued to enable higher yields to be achieved, or any consideration of the impact that higher yields would have on particular sites or for particular areas. The authority did have a general sense that in many instances higher yields would be detrimental but this study does not demonstrate effectively why this should be (although it may be true in reality).

areas remain unexplored, unknown, and somehow threatening,⁷³ forcing thinking back towards maintaining the pre-existing policy positions and standards, again reducing flexibility.

In contrast, the Design-Led method-type shows a greater level of connection between policy and location. Here the foundational idea of the method-type is that policy is flexible, and that through policy changes housing-yields can be altered, but that these changes should be related to site and location characteristics. Consequently the emphasis is on the experimentation of policy position with a sense that it is alterable.

However, here again the application of the method-types is also significant. The North East Arup Study attempts to increase the linkage between the location characteristics through its density-matrix (p.6). This moves towards exploring policy and a greater acceptance of the idea of policy. In contrast, as already mentioned, some North West authorities did not investigate the more exploratory scenarios of the North West Study Manual, effectively adopting a stance that policy is inflexible and should be taken as a given, rather than explored. Consequently in both these examples the application of the method-type over-rides its natural bias.

Finally, even where policy is characterised as flexible, through the design linkage of policy to sites and urban-areas, this flexibility is necessarily limited to particular policies to make it practicable. Therefore the adoption of a set of designs effectively accepts the policy positions that generated them. Consequently, if the designs are used without considering their founding policies, it is the same as using Yardstick or Density-Multipliers formulae without reflecting on how they were derived. Where this occurs, there has been a basic method-type shift from numeric to pictorial representations of policy possibilities. However, this may not be mirrored in an equivalent shift in the perception of policy with regard to its flexibility, whether it be flexible or fixed. Instead, in such instances, the policy positions in the designs have been treated as fixed standards, rather than as an explorative way of reflecting on policy alternatives.

⁷³ Although the North East Arup Study mentions regeneration policies, it also mentions town cramming, and where the application of other densities has been allowed, it indicates that these should be kept within traditional levels of acceptability (i.e. low-medium density schemes), and should retain traditional street patterns and building lines (North East Arup Study p.5-6).

7.5.3 The Differing Spatiality of Policy

Spatiality has been understood in this research to mean the ability of a policy to reflect on place characteristics and place quality, and on the impact the policy is likely to have on these place characteristics. The connection between locality and policy is also reflected in the spatiality of policy. This, in conjunction with the policy connectivity with locality, also leads to Yield-Assessment method-types having differing policy flexibilities, brought about by the method-types' differing abilities to reflect on the implications of changes in policy to the character and quality of places.

The Hertfordshire Study was probably the first to reflect on how a relaxation on housing densities and parking standards and an encouragement of area regeneration through an emphasis on design-quality, not on a standard, would enhance areas' sense of place whilst preventing further service reductions brought on by low-demand.⁷⁴ Here, the Hertfordshire Study (p.25-77), through a design-led applied-method, emphasised the importance of design over planning-standard in creating place-quality, and demonstrated how little the design-quality was linked to density standards.

Llewelyn-Davies advocated this design-led approach in many of their reports: *Use of Density*, London SRQ Study, and North West Study Manual, effectively making it their own. Taken together this body of work emphasises the relationship between policy, place quality and design, undermining the presumption that density standards equate to design quality. Through the *ucs* they demonstrated this link and harnessed it to the idea that housing yields in urban-areas could be increased through highly designed, high density housing, and linked this to sites and policy stances. Elsewhere, Llewelyn-Davies took this assertion further, suggesting that place quality was maintained or improved through the application of these policy scenarios that effectively provided policy with sufficient latitude to become flexible (*Housing and Urban Capacity* p.L-D 6-7 and p.L-D 14).

In contrast the Density-Multipliers method-type makes less of the spatial aspect of policy. This is partly due to the information's formatting (usually numerically) which conceal spatial characteristics. This is demonstrated by the North East Arup Study, which offers quite a complex Density-Multipliers applied-method (Table 2.2 p.6 cited as *Figure 7.4*).

⁷⁴ A message taken up by the UTF amongst others, which also expends considerable space on the need for enhanced spatial identity of urban-areas in many instances linked into increased housing.

Here the *ucs* attempted some form of policy and urban-area characterisation when it considered density options, but struggled with the issue of place quality and the more qualitative spatial dimensions of policy. Here it can be seen that the numeric formulations of policy, urban area and building type characterisations have resulted in a number of very loaded, typified (and therefore simplified) categories. In the case of policy, the characterisation of sustainable criteria (see p.5-6 of North East Arup Study) has been reduced to mean effectively higher density housing in central areas and along public transport corridors and nodes (Zone C).⁷⁵ In the case of the urban-areas a clear distinction between executive housing and the rest of the district is made, with very low densities being applied to the executive areas and higher densities being applied to the other zones. In the case of housing type the study seems to make an equally clear distinction between family housing and mixed/non-family housing, which also results in quite different method treatments.

Figure 7.4 The North East Arup Study's Density Matrix depicting the study's Density-Multipliers Method-Type

Density Zone	Family Housing Dwelling Units/ha (gross)	Mixed/Non-family Housing Dwelling Units /ha (gross)
Zone A- Executive Housing	10	NA
Zone B- Rest of District	25	35
Zone C- Central Areas, Waterfront Developments, Key public transport corridors and nodes	50	80

Taken from North East Arup Study (1998), p.6

These housing types reflect particular views about housing and housing areas, harking back to traditional perceptions of ‘family’, and of suitable housing for executives, and families. These housing-types’ treatment depicts stability, with the application to executive housing of *status quo* densities of 10 dw/ha, and an intention to maintain existing residential design and densities (p.6). In contrast, the other housing-types are depicted by what they are not (e.g. non-family and rest of district) rather than by what they are; and when what they are is acknowledged, it highlights their transitional quality (mixed). Here the urban-areas are presented as places where increased densities could occur, but this

⁷⁵ These correspond very closely to the Llewelyn-Davies’ ‘*ped-sheds*’, with similar proximity estimates being made see North East Arup Study (p.7) and London SRQ Study (p.26).

remains unrelated to discussions of place-quality, and cannot be place-specific, as the information's format does not allow it.

Therefore, policy and place-quality are discussed, generally accepting the possibility of regeneration initiatives but emphasising the necessity to maintain existing densities and areas' character, thereby avoiding town-cramming. This is usually supported through traditional design elements often argued elsewhere⁷⁶ and seldom draws on local examples.

Consequently, the Density-Multipliers method-type demonstrates a lack of method awareness towards the spatial element of policy, resulting in the *ucs* reverting to pre-existing characterisations of urban-areas and development-opportunities, and to arguing for the continuation of existing conditions. Therefore this method-type's inability to consider the impact of policy in place-quality terms effectively renders its reflection on policy as inflexible- either limiting itself to realistic *status quo* positions, or abstract possibilities arrived at through number-crunching.

The Yardsticks method-types also reduce the spatial character of policy, particularly when the meaning of the adopted formulae and how they were originally derived⁷⁷ get lost. This is exemplified by *TtP*'s presentation of the yardsticks. Here *TtP*'s suggested commercial buildings yardstick (p.27), would appear to be derived from the North West Study Manual (p.52 box 6.2).⁷⁸ The original rendition drew on the building's footprint, suggesting site and location knowledge, and was linked into design work (exercises 48-52) that connected the development density to parking standards and the locality, comparable to this *ucs* Design-Led applied-method for sites. Therefore, the original yardstick incorporated a similar awareness of the spatial character of policy as the Design-Led applied-method. However, the *TtP* formula for the Yardsticks method-type derived from this work abstracts the characteristics of the building to a simple footprint (i.e. plan dimensions) and number of storeys, from which the site yield can be calculated. Consequently, much of the consideration of the quality of individual buildings and their localities has been lost.

⁷⁶ North East Arup Study cites Llewelyn-Davies and SAUS (1994) assertion that 'family accommodation can be developed at 50 dw/ha whilst retaining a traditional street pattern', and the same report's assertion that 'traditional building lines can be maintained' quoted on p.6 of North East Arup Study.

⁷⁷ Practitioners are hindered by the government's advice's vague allusions to 'some studies' (*TtP*), and by formulae in which variables are poorly defined. E.g. in the LOTS formula, *TtP* apparently derive this from the Hertfordshire Study (p.87- not fully referenced in *TtP* p.28). Here due to *TtP*'s presentation of the formula (i.e. with its incomplete explanation), South Tyneside originally proposed unintentionally to apply parking and access constraints twice, but rectified this when they completed their actual *ucs*.

⁷⁸ This is based on the similarity of the North West Study Manual yardstick (p.52) and the *TtP* (p.28) yardstick.

Similarly, recently Petherick noted⁷⁹ that the LOTS yardsticks suggested and used most in *ucs*⁸⁰ accorded poorly with the actual available space,⁸¹ and that how the space was treated was dependent on how it was characterised. She emphasised the need to consider the design issues of the space as they pertained to the building⁸² and the location; and she highlighted the misconstrued understanding of LOTS space being a matter of conversion, when for much of the space it was actually more a matter of bringing it back into use. Here, policy and site characterisations are strongly connected, through knowledge of the buildings' internal and external spatial characteristics. Using LOTS formulae loses much of this detail, and consequently some policy considerations are possibly missed. Therefore, whilst yardstick method-types extend policy thinking into considering previously unexplored development-opportunities and challenging pre-existing designations, the loss of the spatial consideration of development-opportunities due to the formulaic use of yardsticks reduces the flexibility of these policies when compared to the original considerations.

This shows there is a direct link between the spatiality of policy and its flexibility, which underpins the development of the Design-Led method-type. Moreover, this spatiality is present in the early methods devised to consider development-opportunities in building, but is lost as these become yardstick formulae, and this reduces the ability to present policy as flexible. Furthermore, this spatiality of policy is least well portrayed in the Density-Multipliers method-type, which is also the least able to treat policy as flexible, due in part to this lack of spatial dimension in its policy considerations. Therefore, how a method-type characterises space is an important aspect of the flexibility afforded to policy considerations, which in turn reflects different understandings of *uc*.

⁷⁹ Petherick, A. (2000) 'Making the Most of What You Have Got' paper at *Delivering the Urban Capacity of Historic Towns Conference*, organised by English Historic Towns Forum, Chichester 27-29/09/00.

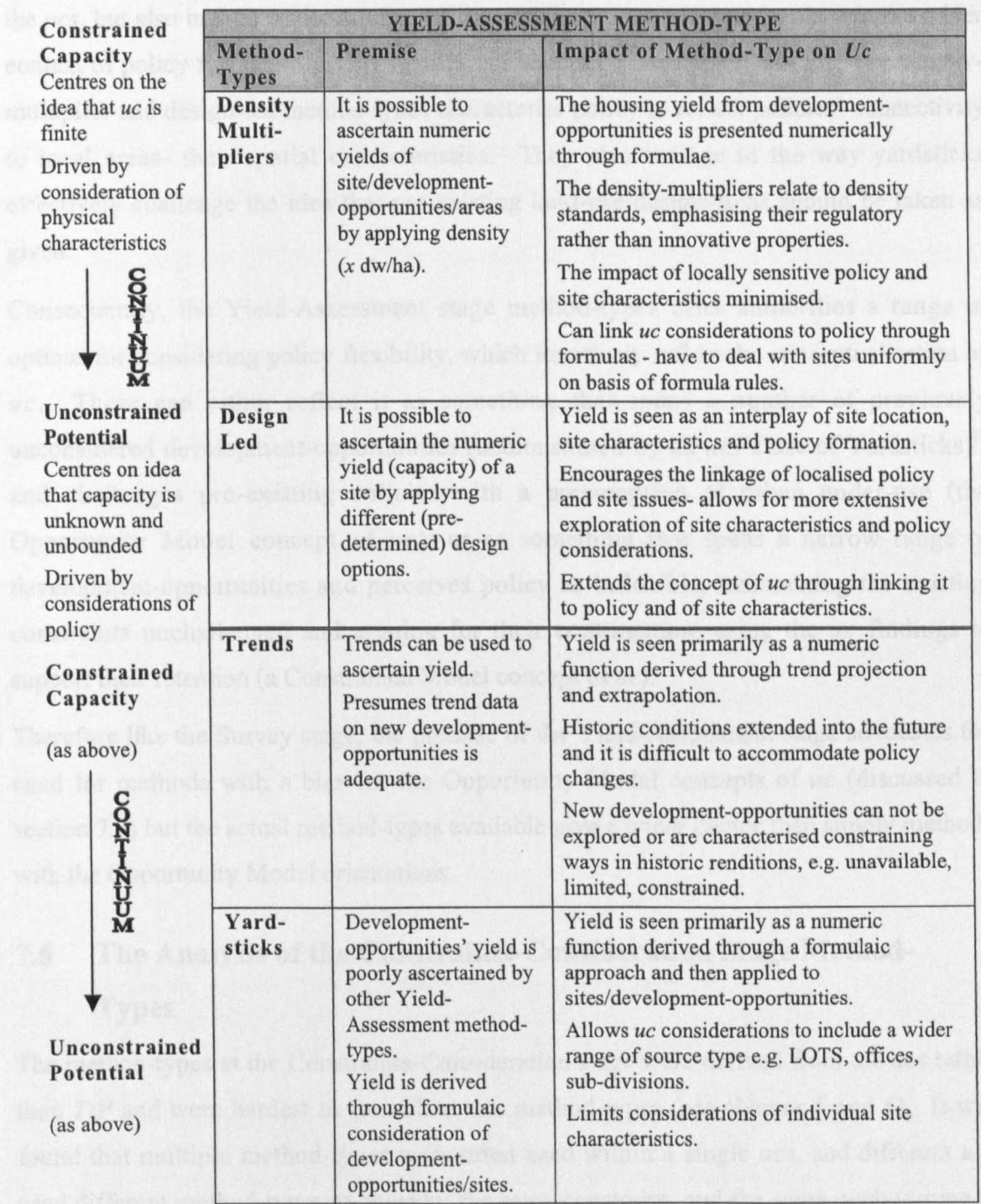
⁸⁰ Taken from *TiP* (p.28) based on the Hertfordshire Study (p.87).

⁸¹ Here she notes that the space should be categorised as (i) no vacant space; (ii) vacant space unsuitable for residential; (iii) vacant space with potential for residential; (iv) one or more existing occupied dwellings; (v) one or more existing vacant dwellings.

⁸² Space standards, natural light, layout and fire safety.

7.5.4 The Apparent Range of Method-Type Bias to be found at the Yield-Assessment Stage

Figure 7.5 Yield-Assessment Method-Types' premises explored against their impact on ascertaining uc and compared against a constraint continuum ranging from very constrained through to unconstrained



This Yield-Assessment stage analysis indicates that method-types characterise policy differently. This results in policy being characterised either as something that is alterable, and consequently as something flexible, or else as something given, and consequently as something unchangeable and inflexible. These different perspectives are rooted in the authority's understanding of the policy function, not simply in how this is characterised in the *ucs*, but also in their understanding of the *ucs*' function itself, and its place in the wider context of policy formulation. These different understandings emerge in the way density-multiplier and design-led method-types characterise policy to reflect policies' connectivity to local areas- their spatial characteristics. They also emerge in the way yardsticks effectively challenge the idea that pre-existing land-use designations should be taken as given.

Consequently, the Yield-Assessment stage method-types offer authorities a range of options for considering policy flexibility, which iteratively reflect the conceptualisation of *uc*. These can either reflect it as something that spans a number of previously unconsidered development-opportunities (demonstrated by an *ucs*'s use of Yardsticks)⁸³ and challenges pre-existing policies with a presumption of urban under-use (the Opportunity Model concept of *uc*); or as something that spans a narrow range of development-opportunities and perceives policy as inflexible, maintaining the existing constraints unchallenged and arguing for their continuation, using the *uc* findings to support their retention (a Constrained Model concept of *uc*).

Therefore like the Survey stage, the premise of the Yield-Assessment stage advocates the need for methods with a bias for the Opportunity Model concepts of *uc* (discussed in section 7.3) but the actual method-types available give a wider choice than simply methods with the Opportunity Model orientations.

7.6 The Analysis of the Constraints-Consideration Stage Method-Types

The method-types at the Constraints-Consideration stage were derived from the *ucs* rather than *TtP* and were hardest to formulate into method-types (see chapter 5 and 6). It was found that multiple method-types were often used within a single *ucs*, and different *ucs* used different method-types to consider the same constraint, and the same method-type to consider different constraints (see *Figure 5.5*). Moreover, some *ucs* considered the

⁸³ Discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

constraints throughout the whole *ucs* (see *TtP* p.29), and in many instances the method-types an *ucs* used have only been referred to obliquely. This created difficulties in identifying and analysing which method-types the *ucs* used.

Additionally, the method-types are themselves often unstructured, including for example talking with focus groups (Focus-Group/Perception-Survey method-type), or discussing the constraints (Constraint-Discussion method-type), or applying unspecified 'discounts' (Discounting method-type). These less structured method-types are very adaptable, depending as they do on the content⁸⁴ and consequently very open to interpretation. Therefore their application is even more important.⁸⁵ Consequently, more consideration will be given here to the application of the method-types.

This stage focuses primarily on the constraints that prevent housing development occurring, but it also reflects quite heavily on policy. This research identified a distinction between the generating policy of the Yield-Assessment stage,⁸⁶ and the constraint related policy of the Constraints-Consideration stage.⁸⁷ Therefore the analysis here concentrated on the characterisation through the method-types of policy and constraints and how these related to the two concept-models.

The aspects of the method-types that appear to influence the understanding of *uc* in apparent order of most influence are:

- the focus and intention of the constraint consideration, whether it centres on the constraint (and its maintenance) or on the policy (and its flexibility);
- the presumption that policy is given or is alterable;
- the characterisation of the changeability of the constraints;
- the use of existing data;

⁸⁴ The reflection of this content material has been left for further consideration in chapter 8.

⁸⁵ This is not to say that the application of methods at other stages is not important-see for example the impact of the application of the North West Study Manual design-led method-type in the North West region's shire counties to see the impact of not applying the method in total (see section 7.7.2). However, in these more defined method-types, the interpretation of the method at the application stage is much less (and therefore arguably the method-types' inherent bias becomes more important), and it could be viewed that where an *ucs* does not follow the method-type it has misapplied it.

⁸⁶ These Yield-Assessment policy considerations reflect primarily on policy related restrictions on the assessment of yield, e.g. the density standards if changed alter the potential yield without necessarily changing other policies elsewhere, reflected upon in the Yield-Assessment stage.

⁸⁷ These policies related to specific constraints issues such as finance-related policies or grant incentives to attract development to particular locations or to redevelop particular types of building. Such policies reflect more on how to maximise the bringing forward of identified yield than they do the generating of that identified yield. This is the distinction being made here between Yield-Assessment type policies and Constraint Consideration policies.

- the consideration of the constraints as single entities or as interconnected multiple variables not easily separated;
- the flexibility of the method-type and its impact on the flexibility afforded to the constraints and policy.

And these will be considered in more detail below.

7.6.1 The Focus and Intention of the Constraints-Consideration Stage

The focus and intention of the Constraints-Consideration stage centres on its response to the question of desirability of development. Here the apparent response of the *ucs* using different method-types to three questions is informative. The first question is:

‘How will development affect the constraints?’

Here the focus is on legitimising and enforcing existing constraints over desires for urban-area housing development, reflecting the Constrained Model’s concerns.

The Leicestershire/Leicester Study’s (Appendix 1) Technical-Modelling method-type exemplifies this. Here the method-type uses pre-existing technical models, retaining all their built-in previous concerns, i.e. the impact of development on the transport network. Consequently its evaluation of policy impact is orientated towards the preservation of the constraints, taking them as given, and unchallenged.

Also in the Constraint-Trends method-type’s prevailing limitations (i.e. constraints) are accepted as given, and sometimes are assumed to increase: e.g. the Cambridge Study (p.15) assumes a declining number of (windfall) sites and consequently factor the trend to reduce its yield.

In these instances the *ucs* consistently present the constraints as fixed, valid and unquestionable, and the development aspiration becomes secondary to the prioritisation of the constraints.

Alternatively, the second question is:

‘How will the constraints affect/prevent development?’

This maintains the focus on the constraints, but emphasises a preference for development to occur. However, as the constraints remain unchallenged, it still reflects the Constrained Model.

This position is prevalent in *ucs* which use the Constraint-Discussion method-type. Here, South Tyneside Brownfield Study reflects on existing policy and site characteristics,

demonstrating the constraints without questioning how these might be overcome. Similarly the Avon Study profiles different towns' respective housing markets again accepting these as unalterable. The Cambridge Study (p.5-7) too presents infrastructure information gathered from key providers,⁸⁸ accepting these constraints as given and unchangeable. In each instance, they set these constraints in the context of discovering development-opportunities, but do not consider how to overcome them.

The Discounting method -perhaps surprisingly, as a relatively new addition to the method-type repertoire and endorsed by *TiP* (p.29-33)- also appears to reflect this position. In many instances (South Hams Study,⁸⁹ Wychavon Study,⁹⁰ first part of the Hart Study p.22), the discounting process discarded sites unexplored on one constraint ground or another;⁹¹ either due to a site-related constraint -its size or condition- or due to the market, or due to its existing use, or due to the undesirability of developing the site for housing- reflected in policy (e.g. Wychavon Study's sustainability matrix section 8 of *ucs*). In each instance the applied-method effectively characterises the sites as unavailable, as the constraints prevail.

A corollary to this second question is the third question:

'How can these constraints be overcome?'

This legitimises development above the limit of the constraints and reflects a re-orientation of the thinking towards the Opportunity Model.

This is exemplified in the different matrixing method-types (both the North West Study Manual's matrix (p.93-94 and p.97-98), and the South West Study (Appendix 5) and Yorkshire and Humber Study's (p.25) Level-of-Difficulty matrix). In the North West Study Manual,⁹² it considers the market as an asset, not a constraint- by giving it a positive not a negative value. This *ucs* also emphasises the most developable sites, by focusing on the sites with the highest scores. It also identifies the problem with a view to overcoming

⁸⁸ Health authority, water and sewerage system providers, education authority, and transport providers.

⁸⁹ Here the South Hams Study (p.4) appears to have reflected on *TiP*'s proposed Discounting method-type linking the discounts to site appraisals, development options, policy scenarios and planning history, and setting the sites into a time-frame for development. However, how this was done is not clearly outlined in the *ucs* and when considering the policies the study notes the policies which will tend to protect the sites from being developed.

⁹⁰ Wychavon Study (section 8) discounts whole sites due to one constraint or another.

⁹¹ The Hart Study calls this discounting technique 'sieving' (p.23).

⁹² See chapter 6 for a full description of the method-type, and the North West Study Manual (p.86-102).

it through policy changes.⁹³ It is this intention in particular, to overcome the hindrances, which orientates this method-type toward this research's Opportunity Model, otherwise it would merely be auditing the constraints, albeit in a different way.

In the South West Study and the Yorkshire and Humber Study, the level-of-difficulty scenarios⁹⁴ highlight the constraints to be overcome on different sites, and the ease by which this can be achieved; and the levels-of-desirability scenarios reflect the market's and planning's preference to overcome them. Here the emphasis is very much on overcoming the recognised constraints on many sites.⁹⁵

Other method-types also lend themselves to thinking proactively about overcoming the constraints; e.g. the Hertfordshire Study (p.8) uses a Focus-Group/Perspective-Survey applied-method to question home-owners and landowners about feasible development incentives, effectively emphasising the need to explore ways of overcoming development inertia. Finally, although most of the North East Arup Study's Constraint-Discussion applied-method reflects on constraints as givens (in the same way as other *ucs*), when discussing policy this *ucs* often emphasises -albeit rather theoretically- proactively altering policy, suggesting a shift towards the Opportunity Model. This shows that these method-types may not usually be used to reflect upon overcoming the constraints, but that they can be.

Therefore, some method-types characterised the constraints as the priority, often because the method-types are unable to revise this prioritisation: e.g. the Constraints Trends method-type fixes the constraints into their historic patterns, reiterating their previous importance; and the Technical-Modelling method-type fixes the characterisation of the constraints to how they have previously been perceived. In these instances the bias towards the Constrained Model is inherent to the method-type itself.

Alternatively, other method-types prioritise the constraints through the method-types' application.⁹⁶ In these instances the constraints are often presented as the context, that has

⁹³ Whether it is a supply-side or demand-side problem, and how extreme the problem is (scored out of 5) and what can be done to rectify the problem.

⁹⁴ See chapter 6 for full description of this method-type.

⁹⁵ These matrices identify a number of constraints issues: (i) which sites are likely to be easily developed; (ii) which are likely to be developed if the market were stronger; (iii) which inhibited sites planners would want to see developed; (iv) what those hindrances are and (v) whether there are policy changes which can overcome these hindrances, as well as (vi) which sites planners do not want developed or which it would be difficult to bring forward.

⁹⁶ Here the North East Arup Study example (cited above) demonstrates how accepting constraints as givens in the Constraints-Discussion method is a matter of choice and application, not a matter of the method-type's own built-in bias.

to be accepted, not challenged. Here the bias is not inherent to the method-type, but rather it is applied through the way the method-type is used.

In still other method-types, even where a method-type has apparently been chosen to challenge the pre-existing prioritisation of constraints, it may still be re-asserted through other means. For example, where the Hertfordshire Study (p.73-74) had tried to open out the constraint considerations (developability and marketability) through a perception-survey, the participating housebuilders re-established the impact of these constraints through their responses.

Therefore in many method-types, either due to their inherent bias, or to their application, the constraints inevitably appear to be prioritised. This suggests a bias towards this research's Constrained Model. However, in a few method-types, e.g. the Level-of-Difficulty method-type, the constraints are characterised as overcomeable hindrances, prioritising development over the constraints. Effectively, these method-types, where they occur, are inherently biased towards the Opportunity Model.

Consequently, a range of biases exists across the method-types. However, the method-types' application may have a stronger influence on the applied-methods' orientation towards one model or the other than the method-types' inherent bias, particularly where the method-type appears to be open-ended and the inherent bias appears to be weak (see section 7.6.5).

7.6.2 The Status of Policy as Given or Alterable

As in the previous stages, the Constraints-Consideration stage method-types also provide the option to adopt different positions towards policy, partially reflecting the overall *ucs*' purpose. On the one hand policy can be taken as given, and on the other it can be seen as alterable. This relates back to how policy was considered in the Yield-Assessment Stage (see section 7.5.1) and similar biases can be observed. Here *TtP* (p.33) indicates a preference for the acceptance of policy as alterable.

However, in some instances the adopted policy position is that existing policy is a given, it is desirable, and should be enforced, and that change is unnecessary or even detrimental. This is the position of the West Sussex Study, the Cambridge Study and the Stoke Study, all of which focus on existing policy and use their *ucs* to augment this position.

At the level of the Constraints-Considerations method-type this position can be observed in the Trend method-type in its acceptance of all pre-existing conditions including pre-

existing policy continuing unchanged. Here, as the method-type conceals the constraints in its statistical format, it is difficult to observe this acceptance occurring.

In contrast, the Constraints-Discussion applied-method in many instances (e.g. South Tyneside's Brownfield Survey) openly articulates its intention only to reflect on existing policy by discussing the impact of existing policy on each site, suggesting a Constrained Model conceptualisation of *uc*. However, elsewhere (e.g. the North East Arup Study p.9), the Constraints-Discussion applied-method is at least used to consider what alterations to policy could be made.

Alternatively, other method-types emphasise the alterability of policy from the outset, focusing on challenging policy to evaluate its validity more rigorously (e.g. London SRQ Study, North West Study Manual). This appears to be the case for both the scoring matrix of the North West Study Manual (p.92), and the Level-of-Difficulty matrix of the South West Study (Annex 3), which both reflect on what changes can be made, through policy, to encourage development, through the applied-method's attempts to identify the specific constraints, and to consider how these could be overcome.

This policy alterability also seems to be an underlying premise of the Focus-Group/Perspective-Surveys method-types, with the East Midlands Study Manual giving ample space to investigate policy options and initiatives, taking this thinking into their suggested method in Annex C; and the Hertfordshire Study (p.8) discussing with stakeholders what incentives would encourage them to develop their sites. This suggests an Opportunity Model conceptualisation of *uc*. However the application of this method-type can also allow focus-group discussions to occur without reflecting on policy changes, by not discussing them. Where this occurs it indicates an acceptance of policy as a given, and adopts an understanding of *uc* which is constrained (the Constrained Model).

Here Discounting is an interesting case; this research has understood Rudlin's emphasis on policy to be directed towards encouraging development through incentives.⁹⁷ However, many *ucs* interpreted *TiP* differently, discounting sites, without reflecting on how constraints might be overcome. For example in the Wychavon Study (section 8) the *ucs* sieved out sites on a number of grounds: because the site was:

- not in a village deemed sustainable;
- designated as a special category: SSSI, flood-plain;

⁹⁷ A view expressed by David Rudlin at a workshop at *PPG3 Housing- Implementing the New Policy Guidance*, organised by room/DETR Positive Planning Seminars 16/03/2001 in Birmingham.

- beyond the scope of the *ucs* as locally defined, i.e. less than 10 dwellings;
- currently active, or reusable for employment;
- deemed undevelopable (subject to a feasibility study which included considerations of policy).

This case demonstrates that, as identified in the South West Study scenarios, some policies are taken as given and maybe unalterable, e.g. SSSI designations; but many decisions are taken which imply unalterable policy without stating it, e.g. the decision to ignore sites less than 10 dwellings; and these decisions limit the method-types' ability to identify development-opportunities. Moreover, the feasibility studies suggest that for this authority, the place for policy exploration is not the *ucs*.

As previously discussed (see section 7.5.1), this acceptance of policy either as given or alterable reflects an understanding of *uc* closer to either the Constrained or the Opportunity Model respectively, suggesting that the different method-types within this Constraints-Consideration stage do have inherently different biases, due to their acceptance of policy as given or alterable, and the method-types' ability and determination to permit policy changes to be explored.

7.6.3 The Characterisation of the Constraints' Changeability

In many, if not all, of the *ucs*, the constraints, including policy constraints, are depicted, at least in some instances, as fixed or changeable. These fixed constraints include particular designations, e.g. SSSIs etc., and operate unchallenged in most *ucs*. However, other constraints are depicted as changeable, either because it is their nature to change - sometimes the market is depicted this way- or because change is considered desirable.

The constraints' changeability is characterised primarily through the different method-types' focus of attention. Here, as demonstrated above (see section 7.6.1) the different method-types either inherently, or through their application, focus on different issues. Where the focus is on the development impact on the constraints, the constraints are characterised as desirable and in need of protection. For example, using a Focus-Group/Perception-Survey method-type, the Cambridge Study (p.5-7) identifies the inability of service providers to increase the infrastructure capacity, and therefore presents this as a final and unchangeable threshold beyond which development cannot proceed.

In other instances the constraint is portrayed as intangible, or beyond control, suggesting that it may be inherently changeable, but that this changeability is not controllable. Often the market or the behaviour of owners are characterised this way. Where this has been the

case it is usually constraining: e.g. North East Arup Study (p.24), applying the Constraints-Discussion method-type, focuses on the market's inability to deliver housing. However, elsewhere, whilst this intangibility is accepted, the applied-method has attempted to harness this changeability, taking account of positive and negative changes. For example, the South West Study uses a Level-of-Difficulty applied-method to present different market scenarios⁹⁸ indicating their inability to influence the market but accepting it will make a difference. Here, the method-type allows for exploitable opportunities to occur and anticipates exploiting them.

In still other instances the constraints' changeability is anticipated, with a presumption of their controllability. Here emphasis is placed on minimising the constraints'-usually the markets'-inhibiting characteristics and harnessing any positive attributes to release further development.⁹⁹ The focus has shifted away from the impact of development on constraints to the impact of the constraints on development. In these instances the method-type's characterisation of the constraints as changeable reflects this research's Opportunity Model.

The constraints' changeability appears to be least well accommodated in the Trends method-type and the Technical Modelling method-types due to their reliance on existing data (see section 7.6.5), and the method-types' inherent need to treat the data as given, restricting their ability to alter it. The Technical Modelling method-type (e.g. Leicester/Leicestershire Study), whilst it could change certain constraints, had to retain its initial premise that development would negatively influence infrastructure. In contrast, the changeability of the constraints appears to be a built-in assumption of the Levels of Difficulty and the Scoring Matrices method-types, designed as they are to investigate different constraint scenarios (see section 7.6.3).

However, other method-types appear to have fewer built-in assumptions about the constraints' changeability. Here the way the method-types are interpreted through their application becomes important. This is well illustrated by the Wychavon Study example (see 7.7.2) in comparison to the Avon Study.¹⁰⁰ In the first instance whole sites were 'sieved' away in a highly reductive exercise that treated most of the encountered

⁹⁸ It uses three market scenarios: strong, medium and weak market scenarios (Appendix 4).

⁹⁹ The North West Study Manual depicts the market as being 'an asset' (p.92), and the East Midlands Study Manual (Part 2) explores the possibility of creating change in its discussion of different initiatives that could be used to generate change.

¹⁰⁰ Here in some instances the Avon Study (p.32) has discounted a proportion of the development-opportunity category rather than discounted site-by-site e.g. redevelopment-of existing-uses.

constraints as fixed, and which only accommodated the changeability of constraints very late, after most sites had been discarded. Moreover, even then much of this changeability was reflected on in an entirely different study- the site feasibility studies. In contrast the Avon Study discounted a proportion of different development-opportunities without being site-specific,¹⁰¹ and where it did discount by site it did not always discount the whole site.¹⁰² This shifts the focus onto the constraints influencing different development-opportunities and reflects on harnessing their changeability to allow development to occur.

Therefore different constraints can be characterised to differing levels of changeability, partly due to the inherent bias within the method-types themselves, and partly due to the way these method-types are applied. Moreover, how the constraints' changeability is depicted reflects particular understandings of *uc* either towards the Constrained Model: Trends method-type, Technical-Modelling method-type, or towards the Opportunity Model: Scoring-Matrices method-type, and Level of Difficulty method-type. This demonstrates again that the whole range of *uc* conceptualisation is present in the Constraint-Considerations stage's method-types.

7.6.4 The Use of Existing Data

As in other stages some of the constraint method-types rely on existing data, whilst others use data usually gathered specifically for the *ucs* at the Survey Stage, or in some instances as part of the method-type (e.g. Focus-Group/Perception-Survey method-type. This information may be policy information, or constraints information,¹⁰³ or local statistics.¹⁰⁴

The method-types which rely on existing data are most obviously the Trends method-type, which extrapolates from information already gathered,¹⁰⁵ and the Technical-Modelling¹⁰⁶ method-type, which needs particular types of data for the model to work effectively. In

¹⁰¹ Here they discounted a percentage of the total unconstrained capacity, anticipating that a proportion would not come forward, but uncertain which sites that would be.

¹⁰² The Avon Study (p.9) noted that it considered 'the availability of a site, or a development-opportunity, in whole or in part' when discounting, and set it into the context of changing policy including regeneration policy as well as the safe-guarding policies many other *ucs* used.

¹⁰³ E.g. South Tyneside Brownfield Study: Constraints-Discussion method-type.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Cambridge Study: Trends method-type.

¹⁰⁵ Here the Cambridge Study (p.11) used existing trend data on LOTS to decide to discount it as contributing an insignificantly small amount of housing to warrant inclusion.

¹⁰⁶ Here Leicestershire/Leicester Study used their pre-existing model (Annex 1) to consider the different implications of development on their infrastructure. Within this model some variables could be altered, but other aspects of the data were as they had been previously given and formatted and remained fixed.

contrast the Focus-Group/Perception Survey most obviously seeks out additional information,¹⁰⁷ and the Scoring-Matrices and Level-of-Difficulty method-types both use material gathered at the Survey stage of the *ucs*.¹⁰⁸ The remaining method-types, Constraints Discussion method-type¹⁰⁹ and Discounting method-type may rely on existing information or draw from data gathered at the Survey stage. In the application of many of the method-types, a mixture of existing data and new data may be used.

Within the *ucs* different constraints are treated differently. Many *ucs* use site information gathered at the Survey Stage of the *ucs* to consider the physical constraints, and perhaps, but not necessarily, ways of overcoming them. Here it should be noted that where sites have not been surveyed it is less easy to consider ways of overcoming the presumed constraints.

Other constraints are contextual; e.g. the market, the social expectations of housing etc. In respect of the market many *ucs* do not gather additional information for these constraints. Instead the market is often depicted as beyond the *ucs*'s control; sometimes it is described and treated as a given,¹¹⁰ accepted unchallenged. In some instances the market is estimated, using existing data to make the estimation.¹¹¹ In other instances, information may simply be gathered from other sources.¹¹² In still other instances the *ucs* present different market scenarios,¹¹³ sometimes because of the lack of information at their

¹⁰⁷ The Hertfordshire Study (p.8) sought out information from local owners, and developers; the East Midlands Study Manual advocates gathering information from the community (Annex C p.3), and the Cambridge Study (p.5-7) sought information from various service providers. As demonstrated in various examples cited previously this information did not always support development.

¹⁰⁸ Information about the site characteristics, the local character, etc. which could be drawn into the scenarios (Yorkshire and Humber Study). Here Barton, for the South West Study, also using a Levels-of-Difficulty applied-method, suggests that site specificity adds little to the reliability of the method. Here the Scoring Matrix method-type uses this gathered information to score the site on its development feasibility (North West Study Manual p.86-102; Halton Study Appendix D).

¹⁰⁹ Here the South Tyneside Brownfield Study and the North East Arup Study use primarily existing data in their applied Constraint-Discussions method.

¹¹⁰ The North East Arup Study applied Constraints-Discussion method.

¹¹¹ The Leicestershire/Leicester Study (Appendix 2) estimated the impact of the market through development appraisals.

¹¹² E.g. the Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.20-21) gathered housing market data from the housebuilders which whilst new for the planning departments was existing for the housebuilders, and formatted for their concerns, which might not be reflective of the planner's concerns when considering *uc*.

¹¹³ E.g. the South West Study Appendix 4 reflects on the market in relation to socio-economic factors including travel to work factors and relates this to house-prices and the housing market performance to help determine their market matrix scenarios of high, medium and low performance.

disposal. In all instances this demonstrates that some information appears limited and perhaps unknowable.¹¹⁴

As has been discussed elsewhere (see section 7.4.1) the use of existing data tends to be limiting, confining the *ucs*' ability to reflecting on the constraints as it always has, rather than allowing it to take new approaches. In contrast using data gathered specifically for the *ucs* improves its accuracy, and its relevancy, and widens the *ucs*' ability to consider the constraints in new ways. This implies that new data should allow a more exploratory consideration of the opportunities, reflective of the Opportunity Model. However, it does not ensure that a more exploratory consideration occurs. Indeed, as the Hertfordshire Study (p.73-74) and the Cambridge Study (p.5-7) both demonstrate, this exploration in itself may discover a constrained view of *uc*.

Therefore it would appear that different method-types use existing data to varying degrees, and are consequently more or less reliant on it. However, where it occurs it is constraining, and where other data is gathered, this does not necessarily lead to exploratory reflections on the development-opportunities, or the constraints.

7.6.5 The Fixedness of the Method

These Constraint-Consideration stage method-types have differing levels of built-in fixedness. Some method-types are very flexible, allowing authorities to apply them in very different ways, whilst other method-types are quite fixed, only allowing themselves to be used in particular, limited ways.

The least flexible method-types appear to be the Technical-Modelling method-type, which is restricted to the way the technical-models work,¹¹⁵ and Trends method-type, which is restricted to the way the trend data is gathered and formatted.¹¹⁶ Other relatively inflexible method-types are the Levels-of-Difficulty method-type¹¹⁷ and the Scoring-Matrix method-type,¹¹⁸ both of which format the information around very clearly structured, fixed lines-of-

¹¹⁴ Here work by Oxley and Golland (2002) aims at addressing the current deficiency in *ucs* methodologies as they pertain to the consideration of the market.

¹¹⁵ Demonstrated by Leicestershire/Leicester Study's Technical-Model (Appendix 1) reflecting on the constraints in the ways it always had.

¹¹⁶ Cambridge Study's (p.15) acceptance of past trends prevents the constraints being considered in other ways, because they are not clear, and the grounds for altering the trends are therefore difficult to determine.

¹¹⁷ In the South West Study and the Yorkshire and Humber Study the Level-of-Difficulty method-type structures the constraint information through the scenarios into the ways the *ucs* wants to reflect on it, primarily related to how developable the sites are, based on their characteristics, the market and planners' perception, assisted by housebuilder consultations, on the desirability to develop such sites. In these examples the method-type fixes the consideration into a proactive consideration of the constraints.

¹¹⁸ The scoring system imposes values on the constraints; then the *ucs* treats the development-opportunities, on a site-by-site basis: North West Study Manual (p.86-102) and Halton Study (Appendix D).

reasoning (scores or scenarios) imposed by the method-type, not its application. In contrast, the Constraint-Discussion method-type¹¹⁹ and the Focus-Group/Perception-Survey method-type,¹²⁰ and the Discounting method-type,¹²¹ are much more flexible, allowing a greater choice in how the constraints are expressed.

As already demonstrated the Constraints-Trends method-type and Technical Modelling method-type equate more nearly to the Constrained Model of *uc* for a variety of reasons; and the Scoring Matrices and Levels-of-Difficulty method-types more nearly equate to the Opportunity Model; with the Discounting method-type, the Constraint-Discussion method-type, and the Focus-Group/Perception-Survey method-type apparently taking on the bias imposed through the way they are applied, rather than through the way the method-types are structured themselves.

From this it would appear that fixedness is a feature of the design of the method-type. It would also appear that the more fixed a method-type the more it is likely to express a particular bias, either towards the Constrained Model or the Opportunity Model, but it is not the fixedness of the method-type which determines the orientation of that bias; this is derived from elsewhere. Conversely the more flexible a method-type is, the weaker its inherent bias appears to be, and the more its bias becomes an expression of its application.

7.6.6 The Consideration of Constraints as Discrete Singular Entities or Interconnected Multiple Variables

Some of the method-types are designed to consider the constraints one by one as discrete entities. These include the Discounting method-type, as it is applied in many of the *ucs*,¹²² and the Constraints-Discussion method-type, where *ucs* discuss the particular impact of particular constraints.¹²³

¹¹⁹ The North East Arup Study's treatment of policy demonstrates how the Constraints-Discussion method-type can be proactive, but other *ucs*, e.g. South Tyneside's Brownfield Study, and indeed other parts of the North East Arup Study demonstrate how often it is not.

¹²⁰ The Hertfordshire Study (p.73-74) example given above, relating to how housebuilders re-orientated the Perception-Survey back to pre-existing thinking about constraints, in ways which diminished development-opportunities, demonstrates this point.

¹²¹ Here Rudlin anticipated discounting that expected proactive policies (see footnote 100 in chapter 6). Yet *ucs* discount primarily, often not unreasonably, due to existing policy e.g. the Wychavon Study discounted for SSSI designations, floodrisk etc. but also because of *ucs* method- it discounts sites yielding <10 dwellings as they fall 'outside the scope of the *ucs* as locally defined' (section 8) and only reflects proactively (through subsequent feasibility studies) on the developability of the remaining sites after discounting.

¹²² I.e. where the *ucs* has used sieving to discount whole sites due to one constraint or another.

¹²³ E.g. the North East Arup Study.

In contrast, other method-types are designed to consider the constraints together, e.g. Level-of-Difficulty method-type¹²⁴ considers policy change in conjunction with the developability of different development-opportunities, and the market as an entity, anticipating that changes in one will impact on another.¹²⁵ The Scoring-Matrices method-type also considers the constraints as an inter-connected entity, valuing the impact of all the variables, aggregating them together, and then considers what the impact of changing particular variables is likely to have on the findings.

The method-types that consider the constraints discretely tend to be reductive, as they apply a policy, or a development principle, or a market condition and anticipate its impact on a particular site, without considering the changeability of the constraint or its influence on other constraints. Therefore, as the Wychavon Study exemplifies, this discrete constraint discounting caused sites to be discarded, without considering the implications of the next round of constraints. Consequently, the number of sites actually considered in the light of new policy was 33 out of a possible 144.¹²⁶

Similarly the North East Arup Study application of the Constraints-Discussion method-type limited its discussions on more positive policy conditions to its policy considerations, without reflecting on its implications for overcoming the physical constraints, and the positive implications this might have on the development opportunities. Therefore, method-types which rely on a discrete consideration of the constraints emphasise the constraint's impact. So these method-types favour the Constrained Model's concept of *uc*.

In contrast, the premise on which the method-types that consider the constraints collectively is based is that the constraints impact each other, and positive changes to one constraint are likely to have positive implications for other constraints. Here there is a clear emphasis on the constraints changing contexts to enhance the developability of development-opportunities; e.g. East Midland Study Manual reflects on different regeneration initiatives and planning powers (CPOs etc.) to alter the market and encourage development. However, at the point of application these constraints are usually simplified; e.g. 3 different policy scenarios and 3 market scenarios,¹²⁷ but still there is an acceptance and anticipation of change, reflecting the Opportunity Model *uc* concept.

¹²⁴ E.g. South West Study and Yorkshire and Humber Study.

¹²⁵ So that a positive market will probably assist a development opportunities developability.

¹²⁶ Here 17 were thought to be developable, and 16 sites were awaiting the outcome of feasibility studies.

¹²⁷ These scenarios are similar the North West Study Manual Yield- Assessment stage scenarios, suggesting they can be used either to reflect proactively on the constraints, or to generate a housing yield.

Consideration Stage

Figure 7.6 Constraints-Consideration Method-Type premises, and their impact on uc set against a constraint continuum ranging from very constrained through to totally unconstrained


CONSTRAINTS-CONSIDERATION STAGE		
Method-Type	Premise	Impact of Method-Type on <i>Urban Capacity</i>
Constrained Capacity Centres on the idea that <i>uc</i> is finite Driven by consideration of physical characteristics 	Constraint-Trends	Trends project existing conditions forward, so the method-type is constrained to exploring only the identified development-opportunities in the context of existing performance. The impact of contextual change, (e.g. policy, market etc.) cannot be considered.
	Technical Modelling	Constraints can be modelled and applied to yields to ascertain their impact. The model is used to determine the impact of development on particular constraints for example infrastructure. The model emphasises the constraining element and the impact of development on this element, not the impact of the constraint upon the development. This sets the constraint as something that is fixed and consequently makes <i>uc</i> something restrictive.
	Discounting (As it is often applied)	It is undesirable and/or difficult to develop some sites, therefore discount them. According to application: most development-opportunities are discounted due to the undesirability of developing them – very constraining. The remaining few development-opportunities may be explored through policy changes to encourage their development.
	Constraints - Discussion	The existing constraints are difficult to change and in many instances such changes may be undesirable. Method concentrates on the existing constraints, particularly existing policy. It may reflect on ways to overcome some constraints, but makes little commitment to actually alter policy. Constraints other than policy constraints are usually taken as given, unless policy might influence them. This limits the considerations of <i>uc</i> by concentrating on the existing position and on presuming that the existing position should be protected. <hr/> Constraints can be overcome, need to demonstrate to stakeholders how this is possible. Extends the constraints consideration through proactive discussions with the aim of increasing yield. <i>Uc</i> shifts from being a persuasive argument for preventing further development to being a persuasive argument for increased development.

Figure 7.6 shows that the Constraints-Consideration method-types can also be placed on a Constrained-Opportunity continuum, but this placement is very tentative and generalised because the comparative positions of the method-types vary in relation to different factors. For example, the Discounting method-type moves towards the constraint end of the continuum in many *ucs* because they have applied the constraints as discounting entities, without exploring the possibilities of reducing their impact through policy-changes and proactive planning initiatives as suggested by *TtP*.

However, as with other stages, the Constraints-Consideration method-types also cover the full conceptual range of *uc*. Some focus on the existing policy and its inability to change, either because the method-type's design prevents the exploration of the constraints, or because the data is limited, or because change is presented as undesirable or ineffective. In contrast, other method-types emphasise the changeability of policy, positively presenting change, and anticipating its ability to overcome the observed constraints. However, relatively few *ucs* appear to be using these proactive method-types, and government advice encourages a method-type with less proactive change built in.

Moreover, some *ucs* which suggest regeneration policies in the Survey and Yield-Assessment stages do not carry this forward into the Constraints-Consideration stage, reducing much of the additional capacity found in the earlier stages. It should be expected that the Constraints-Consideration stage is reductive. However, some method-types, and the application of some method-types, have demonstrated that this reduction can be minimised, whilst others have anticipated the constraints' maximum impact. This will be reflected upon more fully in the next section.

The impact of the application of the Constraints-Consideration method-types also appears to vary, with more open-ended method-types (Constraint-Discussion, Discounting, and Focus-Group/Perspective-Survey method-types) demonstrating a greater propensity to bias through the way they are applied than the more fixed method-types (see *Figure 7.6* and section 7.6.5). Here it should be noted that *TtP*'s preferred method-type is the discounting method-type, one of these more open-ended method-types, and consequently subject to considerable application bias as demonstrated in the examples above.

Nevertheless, the more fixed method-types do have considerable biases, with the Levels-of-Difficulty and Scoring-Matrices method-types favouring a Opportunity Model understanding of *uc* and the Trends and the Technical-Modelling method-types favouring the Constrained Model. Still, this is more built-in to the method-type and therefore less subject to the way the method-type is applied. However, whilst fixed method-types appear

to have stronger inherent biases, these method-types' biases are not all orientated in the same direction, as demonstrated above.

To sum up: at every stage the method-types demonstrate a full range of conceptual bias, with some method-types favouring the Constrained Model and others the Opportunity Model; this despite the fact that the stages themselves have strong biases of their own. Therefore at each stage some method-types run counter to the stage bias.

Moreover, given that there is a range of bias at every stage, it becomes possible to choose method-types with similar biases throughout the *ucs*, or with different biases at different stages, or even within a stage. Therefore, given the variety of aggregated-method-type options this generates, it is unsurprising that *ucs*' application of these in their aggregated-methods generate very different results, and reflect very different understandings of the concept of *uc*. These are explored below.

7.7 The Bias of the Aggregated-Method-Types

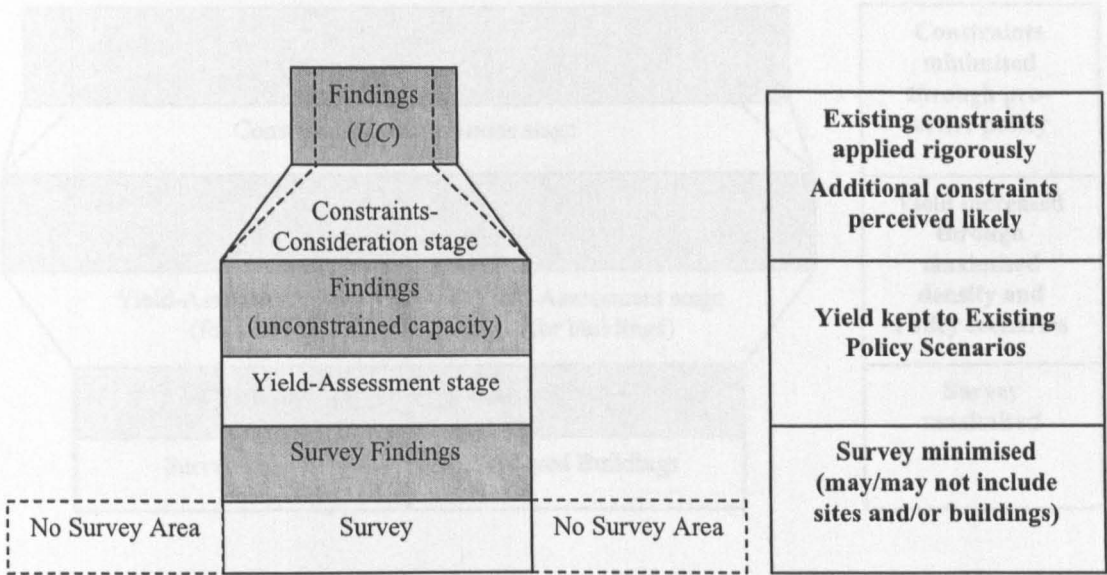
This section starts by developing a number of constructions, supported by illustrative diagrams, which demonstrate how *ucs*' aggregated-method-types are supposed to work. Once these have been established, the rest of this section reflects on five different *ucs*' aggregated-methods exemplifying five different aggregated-method-type scenarios¹²⁸ in relation to these constructions to reflect on how the aggregated-method-types express *uc*.

7.7.1 Idealised Constructions of Aggregated-Method-Types

In the idealised Constrained Model's aggregated-method-type (*Figure 7.7*), the survey is narrow, with large areas remaining unexplored, and in the Yield-Assessment stage, only existing policy is applied, resulting in no increase in the anticipated yield, depicted diagrammatically by the Yield-Assessment method-type not widening the survey findings. Finally, at the Constraints-Consideration stage, the existing constraints are fully applied, with the anticipation that they will have full effect. In some instances this may be taken even further, so that the constraints actually increase rather than decrease. Hence the even narrower way of perceiving the constraints. Overall the diagram is narrow, and the end findings are small, with considerable weight given throughout the aggregated-method-type to what is not possible, rather than to what might be.

¹²⁸ (i) Expansive method types at each stage; (ii) restrictive method-types at each stage; (iii) restrictive method-types at the Survey and Yield-Assessment stage, then expansive method-type at the Constraints-Consideration stage; (iv) Expansive method-types at the Survey and Yield-Assessment stages, then restrictive method-type at the Constraints-Consideration Stage; (v) Only one method-type to calculate the yield-assessment. These are explained in more detail in section 7.7.2.

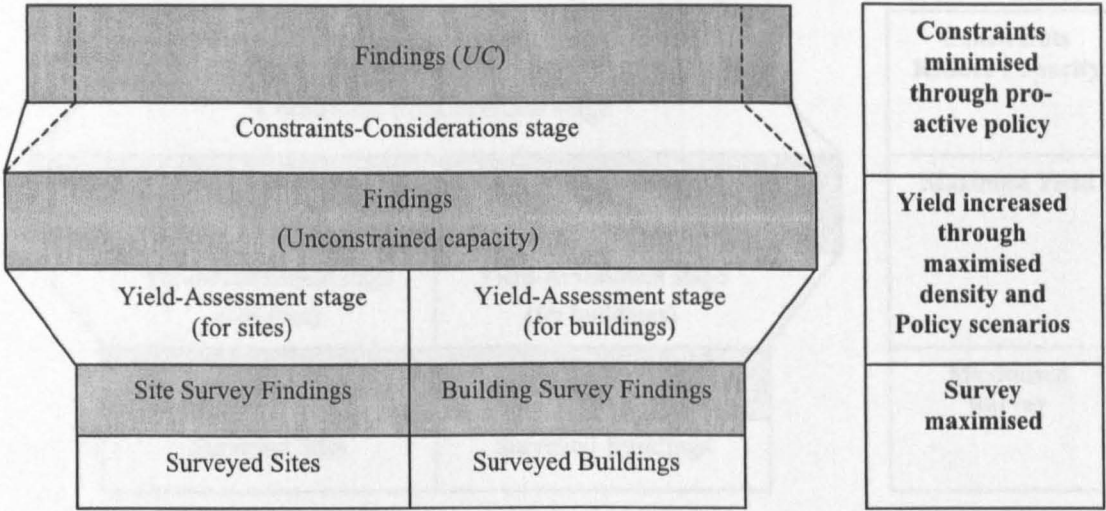
Figure 7.7 Diagram to illustrate the stages of an idealised Constrained Model ucs aggregated-method-type



In contrast, in the idealised Opportunity Model’s aggregated-method-type, (Figure 7.8), the survey is wide, including both sites and building development-opportunities,¹²⁹ and the Yield-Assessment method-type also aims to maximise the yield, again derived from both the site and building development-opportunities. Here, various policy scenarios may be used, depicted in the diagrams as dotted lines, and as these expand the yield the unconstrained capacity increases- depicted by the unconstrained capacity appearing as wide. As in the other diagrams the Constraints-Consideration stage inevitably reduces the amount of capacity, reflecting as it does the constraints to development. However as the Opportunity Model’s emphasis is to overcome these constraints through proactive policy, the impact of the constraints is minimised. This is reflected diagrammatically by a shallower reduction of the yield. Consequently, the findings at the end remain wide.

¹²⁹ The survey method in the previous figure (Figure 7.7), does not necessarily exclude sites or buildings but this might be one reason why it is a narrow survey.

Figure 7.8 Diagram to illustrate the stages of an idealised Opportunity Model ucs aggregated-method-type

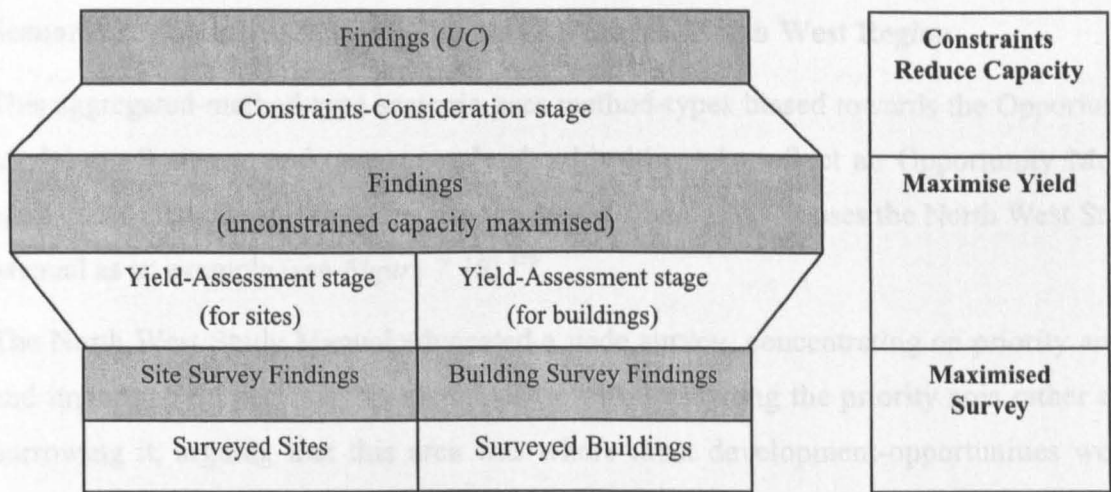


Using *TtP*'s advice on the various method-types and its critique of these method-types (see chapter 5), this research constructed an aggregated-method-type construction which reflected *TtP*'s. This *TtP* aggregated-method-type had stage biases at the early stages i.e. the Survey and Yield-Assessment stages, favouring the Opportunity Model, and at the later stage, the Constraints-Consideration stage, favouring the Constrained Model (see section 7.3).

This provides an idealised construction of the aggregated-method-type reflected in *Figure 7.9*. In this illustrative diagram, the method stages indicate how *TtP* anticipates the stage premises will work (see section 7.3). Here *TtP* anticipates a wide survey, including both sites and buildings, and the use of Yield-Assessment method-types for development-opportunities derived from both sites and buildings, aimed at maximising the housing yield. This finding is presented as the unconstrained capacity, and is very wide-ranging. The restrictive constraints of the Constraints-Consideration stage reduce the unconstrained capacity down to the amount of achievable yield possible.¹³⁰ Consequently, the achievable yield is smaller than the unconstrained capacity.

¹³⁰ Effectively the assessed *uc* expressed as a numeric finding (*x dw*).

Figure 7.9 Diagram to illustrate the stages of TtP’s idealised ucs aggregated-method-type



When *TtP*’s preferred aggregated-method-type (see *Figure 7.9*) is compared to the idealised Constrained Model’s aggregated-method-type, where the method-types at each stage are restrictive (see *Figure 7.7*), and the idealised Opportunity Model’s aggregated-method-type, where the method-types at each stage are expansive (see *Figure 7.8*), it appears to have more in keeping with the idealised Opportunity Model aggregated-method-type than with that of the Constrained Model.

However, as the method-types within each stage demonstrate a range of bias, from the Constrained Model¹³¹ to the Opportunity Model,¹³² some of the available stage method-types reflect different biases from the corresponding stage bias.¹³³ Therefore the idealised aggregated-method-types depicted in the diagrams above are not always realised, and nor is the *TtP* option suggested above. The section below will reflect on the implications of this through an exploration of a number of aggregated-method-type scenarios,¹³⁴ using examples from specific *ucs*.

¹³¹ E.g. Existing- Data and Typical-Urban-Area method-types in the Survey stage, Yield-Trends and Density-Multipliers in the Yield-Assessment stage, and Trends, Constraints-Discussion, and Technical-Modelling method-types in the Constraint-Consideration stage.

¹³² Priority-Areas:Natural-Dynamic, Priority-Areas:Imposed-Dynamic and Total-Coverage-Survey method-types in the Survey stage, Design-Led and Yardsticks in the Yield-Assessment stage, and Focus-Groups/Perception-Survey and Levels-of-Difficulty method-types in the Constraint-Consideration stage.

¹³³ E.g. Typical-Urban-Area method-type (bias towards the Constrained Model) Survey stage (bias towards the Opportunity Model); Density-Multipliers (bias towards the Constrained Model) Yield-Assessment stage (bias towards the Opportunity Model) Levels-of-Difficulty method-type (bias towards the Opportunity Model) Constraints-Consideration stage (bias towards the Constrained Model).

¹³⁴ See section 5.6.2 for a fuller explanation of the aggregated-method-type scenarios.

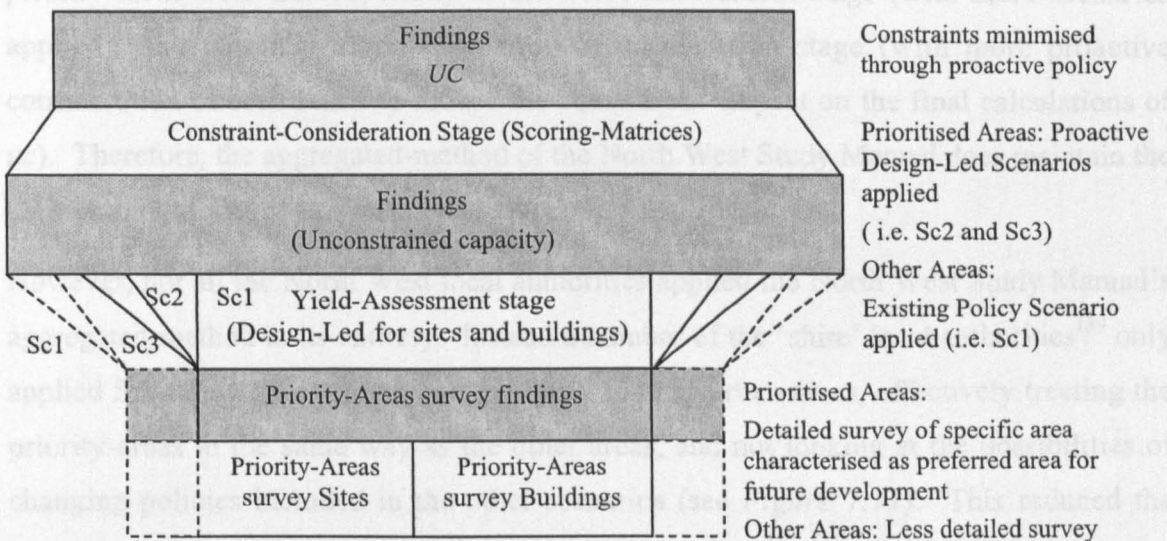
7.7.2 Examples of Aggregated-Method-Type Scenarios

Scenario 1: Expansive Method-Types at All Stages- North West Region

This aggregated-method-type scenario uses method-types biased towards the Opportunity Model at all stages, and consequently should ultimately reflect an Opportunity Model aggregated-method-type, and Opportunity Model findings.¹³⁵ It uses the North West Study Manual as an example (see Figure 7.10).¹³⁶

The North West Study Manual advocated a wide survey, concentrating on priority areas, and importantly noted that *ucs* should err towards widening the priority area rather than narrowing it, arguing that this area was where most development-opportunities would occur, and that if it were too narrowly defined then capacity would be lost (p.23). It also emphasised the significance of the priority areas’ dynamic character in determining high yields, and the proactive policy scenarios that could consequently be applied at the Yield-Assessment stage.

Figure 7.10 Illustrative diagram of the North West Study Manual’s aggregated-method (assuming the method is fully applied)



¹³⁵ However, it should be noted here that the *TtP* (p.32) research found that even these *ucs* had underestimated *uc*.

¹³⁶ Priority-Areas, Design-Led method-types for both sites and buildings and Scoring-Matrices method-type (see Figure 7.17 for method-types used by these *ucs*).

Therefore, the early Survey stage priority-area characterisation had subsequent repercussions on the application of the method-type at the Yield-Assessment stage. Here, those urban-areas designated as priority-areas had the more proactive Scenarios 2 and 3 applied to them (p.53-55).¹³⁷ Scenario 2 allows for 'local change' through reduced parking provision and changes, and more minor policy changes (p.16), and Scenario 3 (called 'the regeneration scenario') focuses on innovative solutions and envisages widespread policy changes to strengthen implementation mechanisms (p.16). These policy changes increased these areas' estimated likely yield. In contrast the unclassified urban-areas¹³⁸ only had the existing policy scenario (Scenario 1) applied to them.

At the Constraints-Consideration stage the applied-aggregated-method used a Scoring-Matrices method-type, which constructed the market as an asset, and considered the site related constraints, either as supply problems or demand problems, before reflecting on how these constraints might be overcome. This drew, at least in part, from the assumptions about the possible policies to apply derived from Scenarios 2 and 3.

Consequently, the early stage definition of priority-areas greatly influenced how much of the area was explored, and how it was characterised. This in turn influenced how the priority-areas were treated, firstly at the Yield-Assessment stage (with more scenarios applied), and secondly at the Constraints-Consideration stage (with more proactive consideration of constraints to reduce the constraints' impact on the final calculations of *uc*). Therefore, the aggregated-method of the North West Study Manual does maintain the Opportunity Model conceptual construction.

However, not all the North West local authorities applied the North West Study Manual's aggregated-method in its entirety. Instead a number of the 'shire' local authorities¹³⁹ only applied Scenario 1: the '*status quo*' scenario to their urban areas, effectively treating the priority-areas in the same way as the other areas, and not looking at the possibilities of changing policies included in the other scenarios (see *Figure 7.11*). This reduced the capacity estimated from the Yield-Assessment stage. Consequently, through the way these *ucs* applied Design-Led method at the Yield-Assessment Stage, many sites which would have been included are excluded,¹⁴⁰ and those that remained only had existing policy positions applied to them. This slightly constrained the width of the original survey search,

¹³⁷ Here Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 relate to the scenarios to be found in the North West Study Manual, not the aggregated-method-type scenarios of this research.

¹³⁸ Not classed priority areas (at the earlier Survey stage).

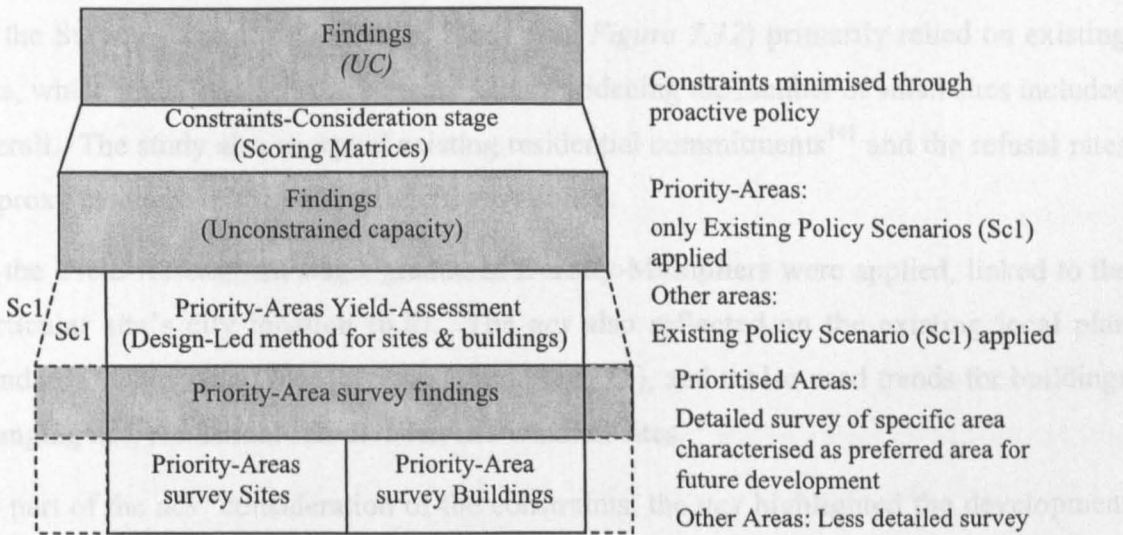
¹³⁹ As described by a planner from the North West during a telephone conversation 03/00.

¹⁴⁰ Here, for example, where existing site designations were for employment-use, the site would be excluded.

as existing policy precluded the examination of certain types of site or buildings, and prevented the maximisation of the capacity at the Yield-Assessment stage, even where design options indicated this as a possibility. Consequently at the Constraints-Consideration stage, even where proactive policy was applied, it only estimated bringing forward yields thought likely to come forward anyway.

This applied-aggregated-method of the North West Study Manual is illustrated by *Figure 7.11* and produces a shape more suggestive of the idealised Constrained Model’s diagram than of the idealised Opportunity Model’s diagram, although wider-based, as this applied-aggregated-method may be wider than a survey method-type pertaining to the Constrained Model.

Figure 7.11 Illustrative diagram to show the impact of applying the North West Study Manual’s applied-aggregated-method using only Scenario 1

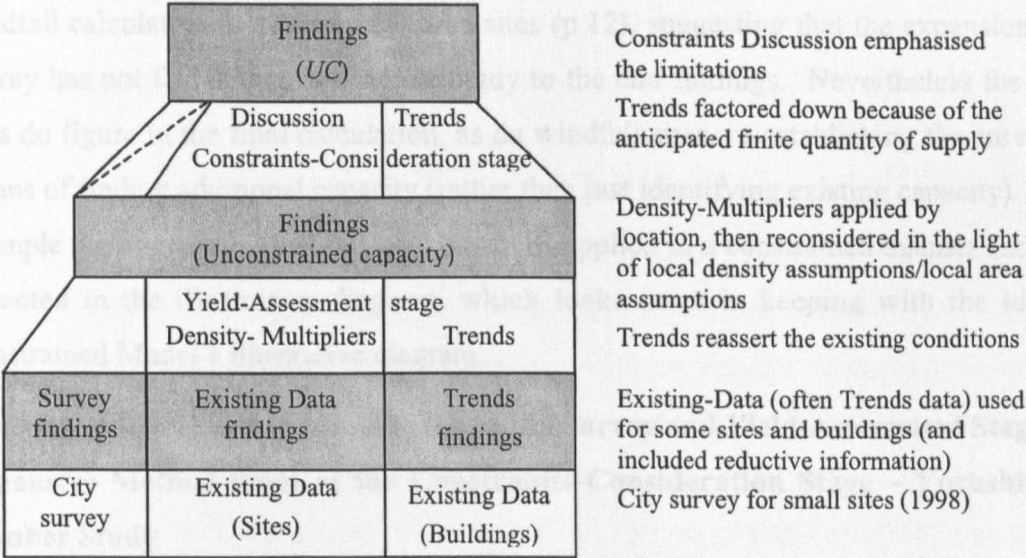


Nevertheless, it should be reiterated here that, where the aggregated-method-type was applied as it was envisaged (illustrated by *Figure 7.10*), the North West Study Manual’s applied-aggregated-method reflects the Opportunity Model’s aggregated-method-type’s illustrative diagram.

Scenario 2: Restrictive Method-Types at All Stages- Cambridge

This aggregated-method-type scenario uses method-types biased towards the Constrained Model at all stages. This should reflect the idealised Constrained Model’s aggregated-method-type (see *Figure 7.7*). The *ucs* used to exemplify this was the Cambridge Study.

Figure 7.12 Illustrative diagram of Cambridge Study aggregated-method-type



At the Survey stage, the Cambridge Study (see Figure 7.12) primarily relied on existing data, which included a relatively recent survey widening the number of small sites included overall. The study also accepted existing residential commitments¹⁴¹ and the refusal rates as proxy evidence of the validity of existing policy.

At the Yield-Assessment stage, graduated Density-Multipliers were applied, linked to the particular site's city location (p.8). The *ucs* also reflected on the existing local plan standards, and existing local area assumptions (p.15), and it also used trends for buildings changing use, residential sub-division and windfall sites.

As part of the *ucs*' consideration of the constraints, the *ucs* highlighted the development impact on the local infrastructure: health, education, road, public transport and water facilities, and suggested that 'better management' could only alleviate some of these restrictions (p.5). This depicts the constraints as unchanging and unchangeable. The Yield-Assessment trends also contained unidentified contextual constraints within them, but the *ucs* also anticipated that some of the identified development-opportunities would be further impeded and therefore factored down the trend towards the end of the period of investigation (p.15). Where proactive policy was considered, e.g. LOTS (p.11), the figures are missing from the final calculation (p.15).

The majority of the study assumes the finite nature of the urban space and the validity of maintaining existing policy, and it takes these assumptions into the calculations. One of the most expansive elements the study includes is a city survey of sites; this broadens the

¹⁴¹ I.e. sites which already had planning permission granted, but where building had not yet started.

ability to find capacity at the early part of the *ucs*. However, the study notes that the windfall calculation is made up of these sites (p.12), suggesting that the expansion of the survey has not fed through the whole study to the end findings. Nevertheless the survey sites do figure in the final calculation, as do windfall sites, re-establishing the survey as a means of finding additional capacity (rather than just identifying existing capacity). In this example the aggregated-method-type has been applied in a constrained manner and this is reflected in the illustrative diagram, which looks more in keeping with the idealised Constrained Model's illustrative diagram.

Scenario 3: Restrictive Method-Types at the Survey and Yield-Assessment Stages, but Expansive Method-types at the Constraints-Consideration Stage – Yorkshire and Humber Study

The third example, the Yorkshire and Humber Study, is an *ucs* which uses constrained method-types in the early stages of the study: Typical-Urban-Area as a survey method-type and Density-Multipliers as a Yield-Assessment method-type, and more expansive methods further on, Level-of-Difficulty method-type.

The early Survey method-type had implications for the later stages of the applied-aggregated-method through the amount of area each typified area covered, and through the amount of development-opportunity identified for each category of typical-urban-area.¹⁴² The early Survey method-type also had implications for the later stages in the way the applied survey method characterised these typical areas and development-opportunities, which then influenced the way the Yield-Assessment and Constraint-Consideration method-types were applied.

The sites were first assessed on their suitability for residential use, with an emphasis on identifying problems.¹⁴³ If these problems could be overcome then mixed-use was considered as a development option. This type of calculation tends to be reductive, eliminating sites at an early stage. The remaining sites considered appropriate for housing (Yorkshire and Humber Study p.17) were then assessed on the likelihood of their development. This was assessed on the strength of the site rather than on any external policy factors. Therefore, if at the Survey-stage sites were considered to be Level C opportunities, 'difficult', this categorisation was carried through the whole applied-

¹⁴² Here the development-opportunities of the surveyed area were multiplied up to give total area coverage-see chapter 6 for a full explanation of the method-type.

¹⁴³ Traffic impact, noise, bad neighbours and conflicting expectations of adjacent users, local environmental quality, and structural constraints of buildings/site constraints of sites.

aggregated-method. Here, only a proportion of sites were characterised as Level A sites,¹⁴⁴ and similarly a proportion were categorised as Level B and C sites. These proportions were then multiplied up to represent the identified typical urban area not surveyed. Therefore, unseen sites were being classified as difficult and this was then carried forward into the rest of the aggregated-method-type.

Density-multipliers were used on different sites, based on their typical-urban-area categorisation. These density-multipliers linked into two density assumptions; firstly, low levels of increase could be pushed for, but without radical change; and secondly, considerable change could be made in policy stances, which would increase densities more fully. These densities were also linked to where the particular typical urban areas were sited in relation to the city/town centre (see p.20). Where it was thought inappropriate to use density-multipliers, i.e. in place of yardsticks, assumptions were used instead. These assumptions indicate a potential gain in different ways, sometimes in dw/ha net gain,¹⁴⁵ sometimes in relation to the likely amount to come forward¹⁴⁶ and sometimes in relation to different levels of development.¹⁴⁷

The impact of these choices is mixed. The high number of typical-urban-areas suggests the surveying of considerable areas, and most types of the city were being explored, pushing the method to its limits. However, through some of the sites' and development-opportunities' characterisations, a number of these development-opportunities were discarded before the later stages.¹⁴⁸ The characterisation of some sites as 'difficult' also fed into the Yield-Assessment stage and was carried through into the applied assumptions there, encouraging in many instances constraint. In contrast, the use of density-multipliers attached to different policy scenarios suggests here an expansive application of the method-type.

¹⁴⁴ Sites available for development at the time of the survey with no significant development obstacles.

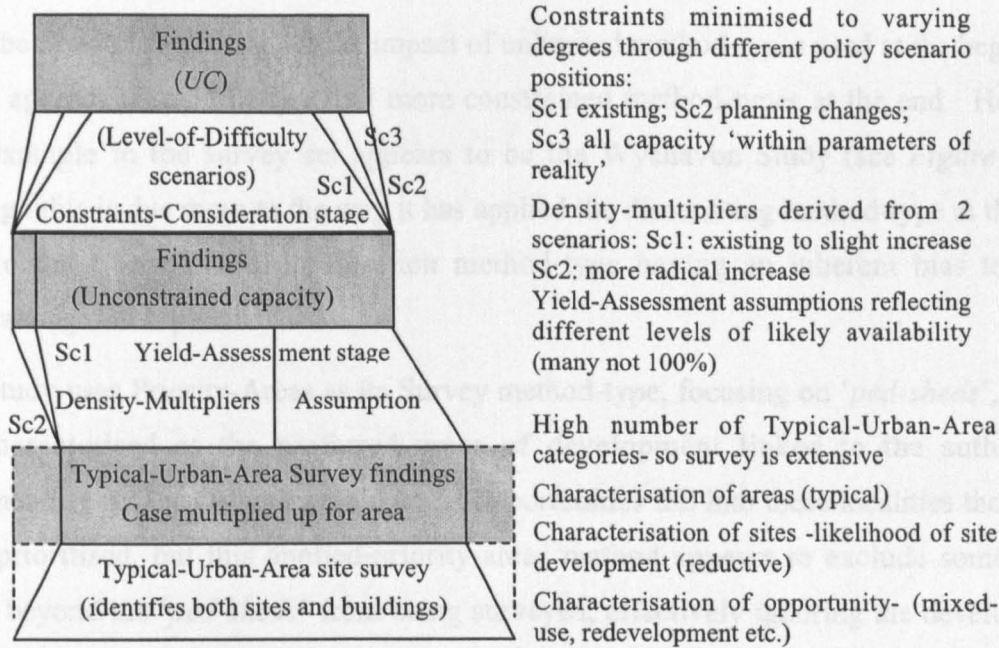
¹⁴⁵ E.g. 'assume a gain of 3.4 dw/ha' (taken from Appendix 5 of Yorkshire and Humber Study).

¹⁴⁶ E.g. 'assume different levels of availability e.g. 10%, 20%, 30%', (taken from Appendix 5 of Yorkshire and Humber Study).

¹⁴⁷ E.g. 'assume 50% development with 50% of site residential, 75% development with 50% residential and 100% redevelopment with 50% residential' (taken from Appendix 5 of Yorkshire and Humber Study).

¹⁴⁸ The use of typical-urban-areas to infer the opportunities of a wider area suggests that a proportion arrived at from the typical-urban-area survey case study findings will reflect the opportunities anticipated for the whole of a particular typical-urban-area category. Therefore, whilst the survey sites might be case specific in their characterisation, this characterisation becomes a generic characteristic of the overall Typical-Urban-Area area opportunities.

Figure 7.13 Illustrative diagram of Yorkshire and Humber Study methodological approach



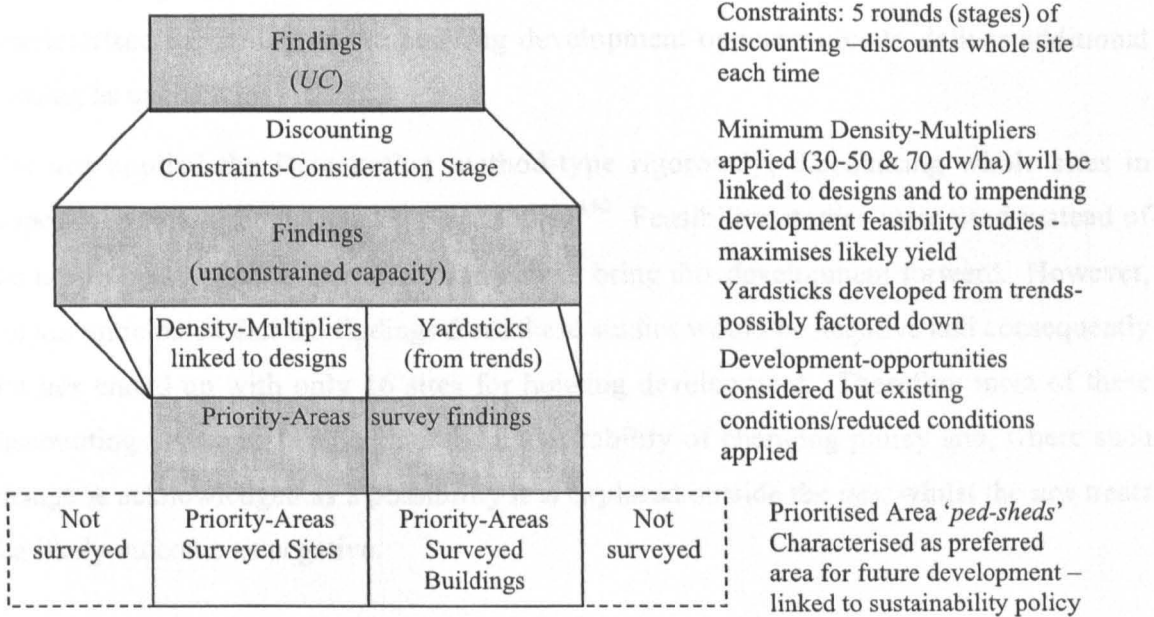
Therefore these more constrained method-types have been applied in their widest sense, but they are still limiting. At the Constraints-Consideration stage, Scenario 2 reflected policy changes aimed at promoting the use of urban development, and Scenario 3 anticipated some exploration of policy notably to the designation of sites, but anticipates only minor changes in conditions. These considerations were also linked to higher and lower densities, and attached to the location's differing market performance (well above average, above average, average p.20) and environmental sensitivities (identified as low, medium and high p.19). These anticipated variations in the constraints impact helped reduce it, and demonstrated a willingness to explore the constraints proactively, but this could only be done to the capacity already found. Therefore, where the earlier stages have constrained the findings of unconstrained capacity, this constraint has fed into the findings of the Constraints-Consideration stage, effectively constraining its ability to develop effective policies to overcome the difficulties on sites already discarded.

Scenario 4: Expansive Method-Types at the Survey and Yield-Assessment Stages, but Restrictive method-types at the Constraints-Consideration Stage- Wychavon

Here the research will consider the impact of unlimited method-types used at the beginning of the aggregated-method-type but more constrained method-types at the end. Here the best example in the survey set appears to be the Wychavon Study (see *Figure 7.14*), although this is due more to the way it has applied the discounting method-type at the end, than to the Constraints-Consideration method-type having an inherent bias towards constraining development.¹⁴⁹

This study uses Priority-Areas as its Survey method-type, focusing on ‘*ped-sheds*’, which are characterised as the preferred areas of development linked to the authority’s sustainability policy. Where development-opportunities fall into these localities they have been prioritised, but this applied-priority-areas method appears to exclude some areas found beyond the ‘*ped-sheds*’ from being surveyed, effectively ignoring the development opportunities that might be there. Consequently this applied-method-type seems quite constraining.

Figure 7.14 Illustrative diagram of the Wychavon Study



¹⁴⁹ E.g. Trends or Technical-Modelling method-types.

However, the density-multipliers were linked to policy positions through impending regeneration studies and were supported, although not led, by design work demonstrating the possibilities. Therefore, although the Density-Multipliers method-type was used, the density-multipliers were strongly linked to policy. Moreover, this policy focused on regeneration, albeit through additional studies of particular sites. Therefore, the priority-areas were chosen on regeneration grounds (likely to be expansive) as well as on sustainability grounds (which might be constraining). Consequently, the priority-areas were also characterised as dynamic, and policy was characterised as changeable, with an emphasis on the desirability of such change.

In contrast to the proactive way this applied-aggregated-method explored the sites-albeit through the Density-Multipliers method-type- the method-type it used to reflect on the building development-opportunities was the Trends method-type rather than Yardsticks. This appears to be constraining. Moreover, the applied-aggregated-method further reduced these trends on an assumption that the number of development-opportunities will diminish. This said, the use of the Trends method-type did extend the applied-aggregated-method's consideration of development-opportunities to include buildings, which might otherwise have been ignored. Nevertheless it restricted the policy consideration here, and characterised the ability of the building development-opportunities to deliver additional housing as unchanging.

The *ucs* applied the Discounting method-type rigorously, discounting whole sites in response to one discount measure or another.¹⁵⁰ Feasibility studies were used instead of the *ucs* to investigate economic instruments to bring this development forward. However, the *ucs* anticipated that the findings from these studies would be negative and consequently the *ucs* ended up with only 16 sites for housing development. Therefore most of these discounting instances demonstrate the undesirability of changing policy and, where such change is acknowledged as a possibility it is explored outside the *ucs*, whilst the *ucs* treats the likely outcome as negative.

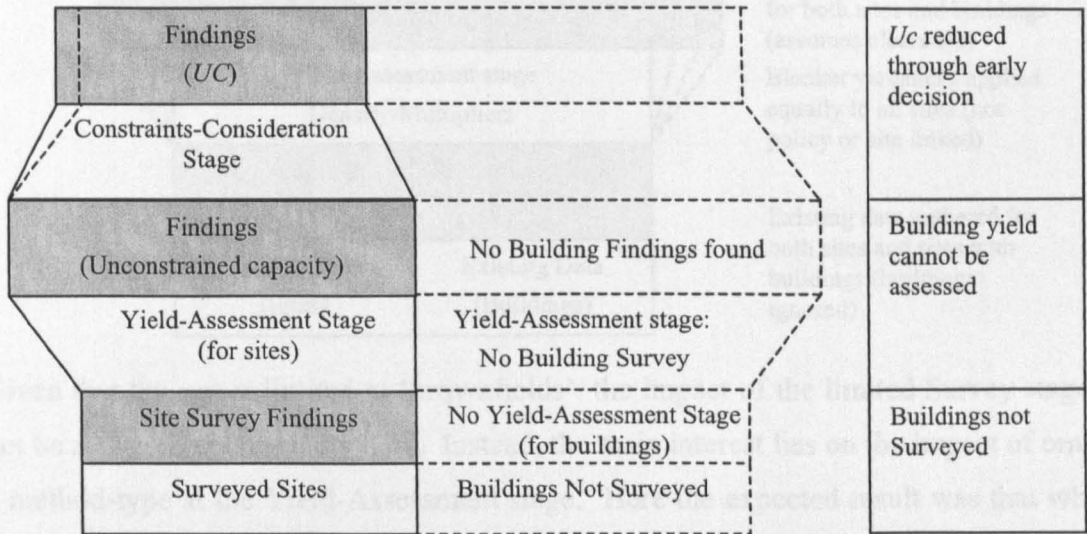
¹⁵⁰ Here the study started with 143 sites and discards 17 on the basis of their sustainability assessment of villages, as they fell beyond the parameters of villages assessed to be sustainable. It then discarded 25 sites on the grounds of their sustainability matrix, including SSSI designations and flood risk. A further 32 sites were discarded as beyond the scope of the *ucs* due to their size (development likely to be less than 10 dwellings), although their possible contribution was acknowledged. 37 sites are discounted because they were active or re-usable employment sites, with preference given to employment where it was thought this would reduce travel to work. 16 sites are discarded as unlikely to come forward for development due to the high development costs.

This *ucs* appears to follow *TtP*'s advice on the aggregated-method-type, considering *uc* development-opportunities in wide terms near the beginning, and saving all the discounting till the end. However, the heavy discounting at the Constraints-Consideration stage results in negating most of the earlier identified development-opportunity away.

Using *TtP*'s suggested discounts (p.29-33), and averaging them together, *TtP* suggests a discount range between 46-67.5% of the total unconstrained capacity total. In contrast, the Wychavon Study has discounted 77% of its sites, greatly exceeding *TtP*'s suggested upper rate. Therefore, even though the study chose an aggregated-method-type in keeping with *TtP*'s preferred option, demonstrating Opportunity Model bias at the early stages and Constrained Model bias only at the Constraints-Consideration stage, the *ucs*'s application of this aggregated-method-type resulted in policies and development-opportunities being characterised restrictively, resulting in an *ucs* more in keeping with this research's Constrained Model.

Scenario 5: Only One Method-Type to Calculate the Yield-Assessment - South Tyneside Brownfield Study

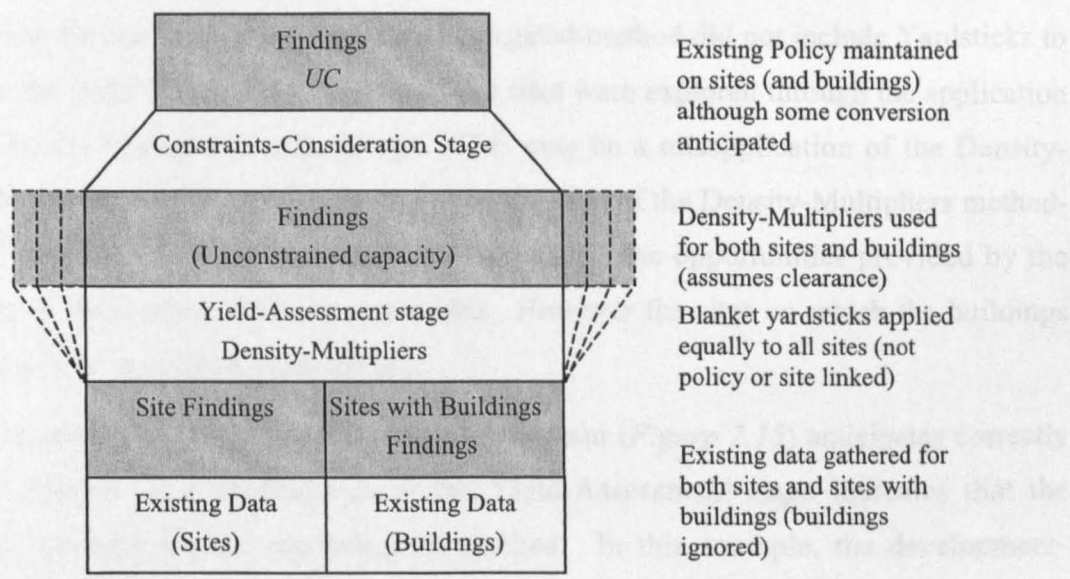
Figure 7.15 Idealised example of the impact of a study not using a Method-Type at the Yield-Assessment stage (assumes that that type of opportunity is not looked at)



In considering the *ucs* a further application of the aggregated-method-type emerged. This was when only one method-type was applied at the Yield-Assessment stage. This was thought to be so important it could not be overlooked. Here the research assumption was that because a Yield-Assessment method-type was missed out a number of development-opportunities (either sites or buildings) would not be assessed. This is illustrated in *Figure 7.15*.

The fifth and final example looks at the impact of not using two Yield-Assessment method-types at the Yield-Assessment stage. The example study chosen here was the South Tyneside Brownfield Study (see *Figure 7.16* below). This *ucs* is a partial study, and does not claim to be a full *ucs*. However, it does use the method-types used in other *ucs* to assess the development-opportunities of the limited range of sites it investigates.

Figure 7.16 Illustrative diagram of South Tyneside Brownfield Study methodological approach



Given that the *ucs* is limited to ‘brownfields’, the impact of the limited Survey stage will not be reflected upon greatly here. Instead, the main interest lies on the impact of omitting a method-type at the Yield-Assessment stage. Here the expected result was that where a Yield-Assessment method-type was omitted the *ucs* would not explore certain development-opportunities. In the South Tyneside Brownfield Study the omitted method-type was Yardsticks suggesting that it would not look at buildings. However, in the applied-aggregated-method the study used an Existing-Data method-type, which did limit the search and prevented new development-opportunities from coming to light, but which also did include sites with buildings, indicating that these development-opportunities were not omitted.

At the Yield-Assessment stage the applied-aggregated-method used density multipliers for 25, 30, 40 and 50 dw/ha. These densities were applied to all the sites, irrespective of the site's size, condition or location, and with no connection to policy. This included the calculation of sites with buildings on them. Therefore again sites with buildings on were not omitted from the *ucs* altogether. However, as the *ucs* used a method-type which did not lend itself to considering the development-opportunities within the buildings themselves, the buildings were effectively disregarded which equated to the applied Density-Multipliers method including an assumption of clearance.

At the Constraints-Consideration stage, the applied constraints-discussion method reflected on existing conditions, planning policy, and planning designations, anticipating their continuance. Therefore the applied-aggregated-method in this *ucs* was very constrained. Here the attempts to reflect on density increases were not connected to either policy or site characteristics, which suggests that they were formulated on very shallow reflection.

Importantly for this research, the applied-aggregated-method did not include Yardsticks to calculate the yield from buildings. Instead, the sites were explored through the application of the Density-Multipliers method-type. This may be a misapplication of the Density-Multipliers method-type. Additionally, this application of the Density-Multipliers method-type effectively anticipated clearance. Consequently, the opportunities provided by the buildings in themselves were not considered. However the sites on which the buildings stand have been accounted for in the *ucs*.

Therefore, arguably, the idealised illustrative diagram (*Figure 7.15*) anticipates correctly that the absence of a method-type at the Yield-Assessment stage indicates that the development-opportunities are being overlooked. In this example, the development-opportunities seemingly not considered are those presented by the buildings. However, this is a little disingenuous, as the diagram anticipated that the development-opportunity (sites or buildings) would not be considered at all, when actually the sites of buildings have been. Therefore, the assumption of the non-consideration of development-opportunities due to an *ucs* not applying a particular method-type is too simple an assumption to make. However, it might indicate that an *ucs*' consideration of the development-opportunities may be shallow and narrow.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ These ideas are considered in more detail in chapter 8.

7.7.3 *The Influence of the Aggregated-Method-Types on the UCS*

These aggregated-method scenarios, with their linked examples, demonstrate that the earlier stage method-type choices¹⁵² have greater impact on the applied-aggregated-method and the *ucs* findings than later stage method-type choices.¹⁵³ This is built into the construction of the aggregated-method-type, with the later stages drawing on the findings of the earlier stages. Effectively, because of this aggregated-method-type construction, where the early stage method-types constrain the parameters of the *ucs*¹⁵⁴ it is carried through to the later stages. Consequently, even the use of very proactive method-types at the Constraints-Considerations stage can only maximise the findings of very limited ‘unconstrained capacity.’¹⁵⁵

However, the Wychavon Study suggested that even using proactive method-types in the earlier stages does not guarantee high findings, as highly reductive applied-methods at the Constraints-Considerations stage effectively factor out large proportions of what was previously discovered, through applying heavy discounts or existing policies.

Furthermore, where proactive method-types have been adopted but have been applied in a constrained way, as has been the case in the way the North West Study Manual has been applied in some instances, the impact is also highly reductive, perhaps beyond its intent. In contrast, where constrained methods are stretched to their limits to maximise capacity, and where there have been attempts to apply them in a proactive way (e.g. the Yorkshire and Humber Study), the limitations of the aggregated-method-types themselves reduce the *ucs*’ ability to calculate higher yields.

This implies that only when proactive method-types are used and applied at all stages of the aggregated-method, including the Constraints-Considerations stage, is it likely that an *ucs* will find *uc* more in keeping with the expectations of this research’s Opportunity Model’s conceptualisation of *uc*.

Therefore the indication is that the current design of aggregated-method-types has a natural leaning towards finding *uc* more akin to the Constrained Model concept of *uc* than the Opportunity Model concept. Moreover, the constraints often appear to wield a greater weighting on the outcomes than perhaps the *ucs* intended. This might go some way to

¹⁵² At the Survey and Yield-Assessment stages.

¹⁵³ The Constraints-Consideration stage.

¹⁵⁴ Through a narrow survey or only using existing density-multipliers.

¹⁵⁵ *TtP* (p.29) touches on this when it suggests that factoring should all occur at the end and that unconstrained capacity should maximise the opportunities.

explaining why the research behind *TtP* found that all the *ucs* that were surveyed found less *uc* for the period in question than was subsequently found and utilised by the market, working under real conditions and within the actual policies available at the time. It also has implications on whether the aggregated-method-types are able to maximise the development-opportunities in the way that government appears to intend.

7.8 Timeline of the UCS Method-Types

This section explores how *ucs* have changed in their method-types choices across the period of time 1994-2002, and the implications of this on the evolution of the understanding of *uc* in the light of the analysis above.

Here it should be remembered that the early *ucs* were voluntary and pioneering in their attempts to assess *uc*, whilst the later *ucs* have been more obligatory, fulfilling a new government requirement. It should also be remembered that the later *ucs* have had more clearly defined method-types options to choose -offered through *TtP*- than the former *ucs*; Furthermore, it should be remembered that the earlier *ucs* are over-represented in the survey set (see chapter 5); and finally it should be remembered that many of the earlier *ucs* were included because they were referenced as 'good practice' *ucs*.

Figure 7.17 summarises the different method-types used by the various *ucs* surveyed. It shows that, since *TtP*'s introduction, proportionately more *ucs* are using Priority-Area and Total-Coverage-Survey method-types than did previously; and none of the *ucs* surveyed used the Typical-Urban-Area method-type which had proved popular prior to *TtP*'s critique of it. However, a number are still using Existing-Data methods-types; these include the London 2000 Study, completed just prior to *TtP* coming out. This drew on a whole suite of studies exploring different elements of *uc*, effectively making this applied Existing-Data method pretty comprehensive and angled specifically towards discovering more opportunities. Therefore this use of this method-type does not reflect the Constrained Model construction of *uc* in quite the same way as other applications of the Existing-Data method-type in other *ucs* do.

Figure 7.17 Table to show the different Method-Types used by the different studies (ordered chronologically)

Study	Date	Survey stage					Yield-Assessment stage				Constraints-Consideration stage						
		Existing-Data	Typical-Urban-Areas	Priority-Area: Natural-Dynamic	Priority-Areas: Imposed-Dynamic	Total-Coverage-Survey	Density Multipliers	Design-Led	Yardstick	Yield-Trends	Discounting	Levels-of-Difficulty	Scoring-Matrices	Focus-Group/ Perception-Survey	Technical-Modelling	Constraints-Discussion	Constraint-Trends
Wychavon Study	06/02																
Hart Study	02/02																
South Hams Study	11/01																
Avon Study	08/01																
NE NL Study	04/01																
Stoke Study	?/01																
London 2000 Study	09/00																
Sheffield Study	05/00																
South West Study	01/99																
Wolverhampton Study	?/98																
Cambridge Study	12/98																
EM Study Manual	11/98																
ST Brownfield Study	?/98																
Yorkshire & Humber Study	07/98																
London SRQ Study	?/98																
North East Arup Study	1/98																
North West Study Manual	1998																
Halton Study	07/97																
Leicester(shire)Study	08/96																
West Sussex Study	06/96																
Hertfordshire Study	10/95																
London 1994 Study	1994																

KEY

EM Study Manual is the East Midland Study Manual NE NL Study is the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study

Leicester(shire) Study is the Leicestershire/Leicester Study

Horizontal line between London Study and Stoke Study depicts publication of *TiP*

The North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study (p.4) also drew on existing studies including a North East Brownfield Study and the North East Arup Study. However, within this text, the authors did provide subsequent advice to the local authorities, offering a method more in keeping with *TtP*'s.¹⁵⁶ Again, given the date of publication, much of the work must have been completed prior to *TtP* being published. Therefore only the Stoke Study represents a real anomaly, coming some time after *TtP* was published but choosing to express a study view on *uc* more in keeping with the more constrained conceptualisation of *uc* linked to this research's Constrained Model.

In contrast, the earlier *ucs* (prior to *TtP*) used Existing-Data method-type and Typical-Urban-Area method-type quite extensively,¹⁵⁷ and many *ucs* used Typical-Urban-Areas linked to Priority Areas method-type to some degree.¹⁵⁸ In these *ucs* the areas are typified, but some consideration is given to their differing dynamics and their ability to change.

Therefore, it would appear that within the Survey stage of the *ucs* there was a move towards the Opportunity Model method-types of surveying, particularly the Priority-Areas method-type,¹⁵⁹ with its greater sense of policy changing in order to encourage development-opportunities, and of localities, and of harnessing the natural dynamic perceived to be there.

In contrast, at the Yield-Assessment stage, the earlier *ucs* (pre-*TtP*) were more willing to experiment with different method-types than the later *ucs* (post-*TtP*). In a number of instances design work was developed¹⁶⁰ as the main way of determining particular sites' and development-opportunities' likely yield, and in others design work was attached to the density-multipliers that were used.¹⁶¹ However, in the later *ucs* this appears to occur much less frequently. The Hart Study¹⁶² did use density-multipliers partially derived from design work completed specifically for the *ucs*; and the Sheffield Study (p.14 and p.16) supported the density-multipliers used, with subsequent design work.¹⁶³ However, most of the later

¹⁵⁶ See North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study, chapter 11.

¹⁵⁷ At the time Typical-Urban-Area was a favoured approach.

¹⁵⁸ E.g. the East Midlands Study Manual, the Leicestershire/Leicester Study, and the Wolverhampton Study.

¹⁵⁹ See Figure 7.17 which shows that 3 of the 6 post-*TtP* *ucs* used a form of the Priority-Areas method-type.

¹⁶⁰ E.g. the North West Study Manual (Appendix B), the Hertfordshire Study (p.25-71) and the London SRQ Study (Annex 2).

¹⁶¹ E.g. the Halton Study and the Wolverhampton Study.

¹⁶² The Hart Study (p.17) carried out 10 case studies to work out appropriate density-multipliers. This suggests at least a partial acceptance of the design-led method-type. In contrast, the Sheffield Study (p.14 and p.16) generated its yield-assessment through density-multipliers and then supported these with designs; this is not a design-led method-type, but a Density-Multipliers method-type supported by designs.

¹⁶³ This use of design work to support density-multipliers is in keeping with *TtP*'s recommendation (p.25).

ucs use Density-Multipliers method-type to calculate the yield within the development-opportunities.

Most of these later *ucs* apply complex density-multipliers linked in different density scenarios to locations¹⁶⁴ or to policy change.¹⁶⁵ However some *ucs*, (e.g. the South Hams Study), use a straightforward range of density multipliers¹⁶⁶ to calculate the yield on all its sites, and the Stoke Study uses the new minimum standard as a simple density-multiplier.¹⁶⁷ This is more in keeping with how *ucs* like the South Tyneside Brownfield Study applied their density-multipliers in the past (1998).

At first reading the later Yield-Assessment stage method-types appear to be very constrained, and in some instances this indeed seems to be true.¹⁶⁸ However, other *ucs* adopted these density-multipliers as minimum, rather than maximum, density standards, suggesting a shift in emphasis hidden in the method-types' similarities with previous *ucs*. Certainly, the density-multipliers applied tend to be higher post-*TiP* (2000) than those applied pre-*TiP*. This trend has continued where: an individual density-multiplier was used;¹⁶⁹ density ranges were used;¹⁷⁰ and studies have used designs to develop density-multipliers.¹⁷¹ This partly reflects *PPG3:2000*'s introduction of a minimum density standard of 30 dw/ha, which superseded the previous baseline figure of average existing

¹⁶⁴ See for example Hart Study (p.18), Sheffield Study (p.14), Wychavon Study (Section 7 and Appendix B) and the Avon Study (p.42).

The Wychavon Study (Section 7) uses net density figures on a site by site basis linked to the site's size and location. All sites are calculated at 30 dw/ha, some by 50 dw/ha and others by 70 dw/ha, in connection with the local plan review policy for 70 dw/ha in town centre locations- This demonstrates a higher level of sophistication than many of the studies but not as high a level as others. The study also reiterates that the densities used in the study does not preclude later development densities being considered when the nature of the development is more fully known par.7.1.

The Avon Study (p.9 and p.42), which uses minimum net densities for specific types of location to ensure levels of consistency in the approach but makes the point that this should not constrain higher densities from being taken up where possible (p.9) and demonstrates how these were used (p.42) noting that some authorities exceeded these densities 'given that they were not maximum standards.'

¹⁶⁵ Similar to the changes highlighted in section 7.5 of this chapter.

¹⁶⁶ The South Hams Study's (p.3) density-multiplier range: 30, 40 and 50 dw/ha.

¹⁶⁷ The Stoke Study (par. 20 p.7).

¹⁶⁸ Stoke Study for example.

¹⁶⁹ East Midland Study Manual:1998 (Annex C p.14): 25 dw/ha compared to even Stoke Study:2001 (p.7): 30 dw/ha.

¹⁷⁰ South Tyneside Brownfield Study (1998) 25-30, and 40-50 is the same when compared to the South Hams Study (2001 p.3) and the Hart Study (2002 p.18): 30, 40 or 50 dw/ha; and less when compared to Wychavon Study's:2002 (Section 7): 30, 50 and 70 dw/ha.

¹⁷¹ With the earlier study -the Halton Study (1997)- using densities of 27-34, 40-50 and 60-75 dw/ha (p.105) compared to the later study -the Sheffield Study (2000 p.14)- using densities of 25-35, 50-60 and 100-120 dw/ha.

densities in the authority's area (usually 25 dw/ha) and which in some instances was the only figure used.¹⁷²

The lack of Design-Led method-types in the *ucs* is surprising. Possible reasons for its absence might be: Firstly, this research's own weakness, with its disproportionate emphasis on earlier *ucs* (previously discussed- see chapter 5). Secondly, these more recent *ucs* largely supported recent plans at EIP and may have been hurried to meet EIP timetables and deadlines, preventing lengthy design exercises.¹⁷³ Thirdly, designs are expensive and local authorities on restricted budgets prefer the cheaper option of Density-Multipliers method-types perhaps subsequently supported by designs.¹⁷⁴ The survey findings demonstrate that *ucs* are tending to use Density Multipliers method-type rather than designs, contrary to government preference. This may hinder the full maximisation of capacity as shown by the higher yields, which appear to be possible when designs are used.¹⁷⁵

Another surprising finding at the Yield-Assessment stage is that Trends method-types have been widely used, notably to assess the yield of buildings, expressly against government advice,¹⁷⁶ given because in the government's view the Trends method-type extends historic conditions into the future, and prevents results from reflecting changes in policy.¹⁷⁷

The very early *ucs* used trends, e.g. the London 1994 Study,¹⁷⁸ and the Cambridge Study in 1998, but most of the 14 *ucs* prior to 2000 did not use trends. In contrast, out of the eight studies surveyed after 2000, four of the *ucs* used trends to assess part of their yield. Out of these four *ucs*, most¹⁷⁹ use trends to calculate buildings' yield.¹⁸⁰ Only three *ucs* use

¹⁷² E.g. East Midland Study Manual (p.14 Annex C).

¹⁷³ A reason given by the Wychavon Study (Section 10). If this were true, then as time goes by and as authorities have more time to develop the design, more *ucs* should be design-led. E.g. Kent's *ucs* was beginning to develop a design brief in 1998 (Kent:1998).

¹⁷⁴ The Avon Study (p.38) indicates that it has reflected on Llewelyn-Davies' *Providing More Homes in Urban Areas* including some of its design layout in its Appendix 2.

¹⁷⁵ E.g. the Halton Study (p.105) and the Sheffield Study (p.14-16).

¹⁷⁶ *TtP* excludes trends from its considerations entirely (p.23-28) and *Housing and Urban Capacity* p.L-D 5.

¹⁷⁷ See section 6.5.4 for the government critique of the Trends method-type.

¹⁷⁸ The London Study (p.57) used Trends method-type to estimate small sites but suggested that some consideration should be given for changes in policy e.g. the use of backland development.

¹⁷⁹ The South Hams Study used trends to investigate sub-division of existing buildings, flats over shops, redevelopment of existing housing (see study p.6); Hart Study used trends to look at development of 'non site-specific development-opportunities' (see study p 26); the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study extrapolated results taken from previous studies: notably the North East Arup Study p.26-30, and the North East Brownfield Study (also completed by Nathaniel Lichfield) p.42-46. It also projected the current build rates forward (p.22-24) and extrapolated the NLUD returns (p.34-39); and the Stoke Study used trends to anticipate the future potential from buildings or areas yet to be brought forward (windfall) (p.4).

¹⁸⁰ Sub-division of housing, conversions of commercial buildings, development of vacant/derelict buildings and/or LOTS.

yardsticks explicitly, although the London 2000 Study drew on other studies which have used yardsticks.¹⁸¹ Only South Hams Study (p.6) used trend-based yardsticks and these were factored down to accommodate the anticipated reduction in site supply.

This reversion to the use of Trends method-types can be interpreted as a move towards more constrained ways of perceiving *uc*. Alternatively, it can be understood as an extension of the overall *uc* concept through the widening of the development-opportunities (discussed in chapter 8). In this second interpretation, particular development-opportunities were previously overlooked in *ucs* and are now being considered, suggesting a widening out rather than a narrowing of the concept of *uc*. In particular LOTS and empty homes have been included more in the later *ucs*, though most *ucs* in the entire period have considered the sub-division of existing housing and the conversion of commercial buildings (see chapter 8).

A further reason for this reversion to Trends method-types may be due to the vagueness of the *TtP* yardstick formulae¹⁸² rather than its offering precise formulae of its own.¹⁸³ It may also be due to *TtP*'s circumspect criticism of the Trends method-types.¹⁸⁴ This lack of clarity by *TtP* may have deterred authorities from using Yardsticks method-types, without making them aware of the government's earlier criticisms of Trends method-types. Whatever the reason, a shift away from Yardsticks method-types towards Trends method-types at the Yield-Assessment stage has occurred, perhaps against government's intentions.

On the other hand, the fact that the government's critique of Typical-Urban-Areas method-type in *TtP* and that the previous critique of trends, in *Housing and Urban Capacity*, both resulted in such a clear pattern of avoidance by authorities gives an insight into how powerful these 'technical' guidance notes appear to be.

The patterns of method-type usage at the Constraints-Consideration stage also show that the later *ucs* do reflect *TtP*'s advice quite closely, adopting its proposed Discounting method-type. As a result some have reflected more on the reasons for development-opportunities being discarded (discussed in chapter 8) and most have given an indication of how they exercised their professional judgement, although this might be quite an abridged

¹⁸¹ E.g. London SRQ Study (p.47), in calculating the housing yield of residential subdivision, determined the floorspace of private sector dwellings and then used the local boroughs' minimum floorspace thresholds to estimate how many units the original unit could be subdivided into.

¹⁸² Referencing other *ucs* where yardsticks can be found, not always very precisely, making them difficult to follow up.

¹⁸³ Which the authors might have felt was too prescriptive.

¹⁸⁴ Not mentioning them at all.

summary of the considerations they included in their thinking. Therefore *TtP* has been heeded and applied; and this too demonstrates the power of government's guidance documents.

Nevertheless, in some *ucs*, the government advice has been set aside or modified, e.g. the Stoke Study excludes sites early on in the process, against government guidance. A more common modification has been through the interpretation of *TtPs* Discounting method-type. Many of the *ucs* reduced the unconstrained capacity on a site-by-site basis,¹⁸⁵ rather than as a proportion of the different development-opportunities.¹⁸⁶ The latter appears closer to the government's desired intent, and more closely aligned to the Opportunity Model. The site-by-site application of this method-type appears to reflect *TtP*'s suggested method but applied very differently, to the point where they are the same in name only.¹⁸⁷

The earlier *ucs* present much more of their constraint considerations, including, in some instances, the type of policy changes necessary to overcome these constraints; whilst the later *ucs* emphasised the discounts, usually without considering how the constraints could be overcome,¹⁸⁸ and where exploring policy was suggested as a possibility it was considered beyond the *ucs*.¹⁸⁹ This suggests that rather surprisingly the later *ucs* have moved away from the Opportunity Model, and towards the Constrained one.

7.9 Conclusion

Returning to this chapter's earlier analysis (sections 7.3-7.6), the different method-types used at the various stages appear to reflect the full range of bias from this research's Constrained Model through to this research's Opportunity Model of *uc*.

However, the application of the method-types also influenced this bias, particularly at the Constraints-Consideration stage. Moreover, the analysis of the aggregated-method-types demonstrated that rigorous discounting at this later stage could undo much of any bias towards maximising opportunities built in to the aggregated-method-type at the earlier stages, suggesting that in this regard, later *ucs* are moving away from the Opportunity Model.

¹⁸⁵ South Hams Study (p.5), Wychavon Study (Section 8).

¹⁸⁶ Avon Study (p.32).

¹⁸⁷ Here this research has already demonstrated how constraining this site-by-site application of the Discounting method-type is, and how the government's intention for the discounting method-type varied from its more usual application (see section 6.6.1).

¹⁸⁸ See for example the South Hams Study (p.5) which presents a number of discounting stages resulting in a fixed number of specific sites being 'discounted' from the list of possible opportunities.

¹⁸⁹ E.g. Wychavon Study suggested completing feasibility studies for some of its sites.

In answer to the questions posed in chapter 5, the patterns in the method-type used in *ucs* (see *Figure 7.17*) show some changes in the method-types being chosen, and changes in their application. This is most pronounced in the use of Discounting at the Constraints-Consideration stage, which has replaced the use of other method-types at this stage. It is also pronounced in the *ucs*' move away from the Typical-Urban-Area method-type at the Survey stage, since *TtP*'s criticism of it as a method-type. These patterns show that the government guidance is important in determining what methods are used.

This analysis demonstrates that the changes in the *ucs*' choice of method-type are linked to shifts in thinking, and this is strongly connected to the government guidance. A comparison between the *TtP*'s method-type critique and the method-type biases shows *TtP* favouring method-types more orientated towards this research's Opportunity Model.¹⁹⁰ This has subsequently been taken up in recent *ucs* on the strength of this guidance. However, the application of *TtP*'s suggested Discounting method-type tends to over-emphasise the constraints' impact on development-opportunities, re-establishing the predominance of these constraints and consequently reverting to the Constrained Model conceptualisation of *uc*.

Nevertheless *TtP*, and thereby government, has had a powerful influence on the *ucs* method-types. This is demonstrated, in the first instance, by the *ucs* adoption of *TtP*'s terminology, and in the second instance, by their choice of method-types which correlate to *TtP*'s preferred options; although, as already said, the application of these method-types correlates less well.

This presents an interesting dichotomy. This research has demonstrated that different method-types do have different biases, some towards constraining development and others towards encouraging it. It has also demonstrated that government prefers the method-types which reflect the Opportunity Model, and this accords well with their shift in the conceptualisation of *uc* (demonstrated in chapter 4). Therefore the government appears to have a coherent concept of *uc* now nearer the Opportunity Model than the Constrained Model of *uc*.

Moreover, this coherence appears to have been transferred to local authorities' perceptions of *uc* as these are expressed through the *ucs*' method-types, with many local authorities

¹⁹⁰ This answers questions 3-6 posed at the start of chapter 5: Does the government have any preferences in the methods that are used to discover *uc*, and if so what, and are they significant?

adopting the government's preferred method-type options; these method-types adhere to the Opportunity Model.

However -and here is the interesting split- the aggregated-method-types themselves have a tendency towards constraint (the Constrained Model); and at the point of application many of these method-types are applied in ways that are constraining, demonstrating a continuing conceptualisation of *uc* more in keeping with the Constrained Model.

Effectively, then, although the whole concept appears to be moving towards the Opportunity Model of *uc*, and the government's preferred method-types and argumentation appear to favour this shift, the aggregated-method types and the application of these methods-types seem to express a conceptualisation of *uc* more in keeping with the Constrained Model of *uc*. This will be further elaborated on, in the context of the other findings of this research, in chapter 10.

Chapter 8 The *UCS* Survey: The *UCS* Assessment-Content

Chapter 8 The UCS Survey: The UCS Assessment-Content

8.1 Introduction

The last chapter reflected upon how *uc* as a concept has been expressed through the *ucs* assessment **methods**. This chapter will consider how the *uc* concept has been expressed through the *uc* assessment-**content**. Here the *uc* assessment-content, as the substance of what was being assessed in an *ucs*, has been understood to be the *uc*, and not merely an expression of *uc*. However, this *uc* can be either constrained or expansive. This is determined by the way *uc* has been perceived, and by what is included and excluded. This is an expression of *uc*, and understanding this expression helps in understanding what *uc* has actually been assessed, and how it relates to other expressions of *uc*.

To reflect on the *ucs* assessment-content this research analysed¹ the surveyed *ucs* content against this research's concept-models, focusing on the area that was covered; i.e. the coverage of the total-urban-area, and how this was identified, the breadth of the development-opportunities considered in the various *ucs*, and the depth of the *ucs*' considerations.

8.2 Analysis of Coverage- Area Identification: Total-Urban-Area

As indicated in chapter 5 the *ucs* identified the area they intended to cover, i.e. the total-urban-area, quite differently. However, many *ucs* used a number of ways to identify their area, and whichever way was used to identify it, many of the same cities or towns would have emerged. This said, the way the *ucs* identified the total-urban-area also characterised the total-urban-area and in some instances, may have influenced the method-types the *ucs* could use.

8.2.1 Administrative Boundaries

One way *ucs* determined their total-urban-area was by their administrative boundaries.² Here the whole district was included and considered. This maximises the *ucs* search parameters to include the whole of the area the authority has a remit to explore, reflecting the Opportunity Model. However, how this wide area was explored was also important;

¹ This research's analysis methods are fully described in chapter 5 (section 5.7).

² The Stoke Study, Halton Study, and both the South Tyneside Brownfield Survey and South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft).

most of the London *ucs* used borough data returns³ and were therefore restricted to borough boundaries, and the London SRQ Study (p.26) used case-study boroughs, reflective of 'typical' boroughs, then extrapolated the totals to give an insight into the implications for the whole Greater London area. Therefore, the method-types used to identify and characterise these borough-wide areas did not correspond with the explorative possibilities of the search parameters.

The Cambridge Study borough-wide total-urban-area excluded the greenbelt,⁴ as did the South Tyneside 2003 Study (Consultation Draft). In contrast, the Wolverhampton Study included its greenbelt. This suggests a wider definition of the total-urban-area by the Wolverhampton Study, maximising the search area. However, as part of the Opportunity Model's concept of *uc* is to protect greenfield land by developing in urban areas, this may allow sites and settlements to be considered which do not accord with this thinking.⁵ Therefore, this is one instance where constraint would accord more nearly to the Opportunity Model.

This greenbelt issue also highlighted the difference in local characteristics, with some authorities presiding over very rural areas and others over urban, or mixed ones.⁶ Within the survey set, only the Avon Study (p.6) acknowledged the possibility of defining the total-urban-area in terms of 'urban uses', as suggested by *TtP* (p.9), through its stating that it did not look at 'urban uses' in villages or other rural areas beyond its defined 'urban areas'. This 'use' term suggests that, where it is taken up, a wider definition of 'urban' has been utilised, allowing exploration in rural localities as well as built-up ones. Again, it could be construed to extend the total-urban-area definition into the areas the Opportunity Model appears to seek to protect. However, no *ucs* used this definition.

This administrative definition emphasises the policy and management functions, which could suggest a more explorative policy approach. However *ucs* using administrative boundaries tended to use Existing-Data method-types at the Survey stage associated with the Constrained Model of *uc*.

³ The London 2000 Study (Annex 1) and London 1994 Study (p.8).

⁴ Which was subject to an alternative study: *Towards a New Cambridge Greenbelt* (1998).

⁵ This is considered in more detail in chapter 9 in South Tyneside's reflections on their *ucs*.

⁶ An interesting future research project would be to explore how rural and urban authorities have carried out *ucs* given their distinctly different pressures.

8.2.2 Statistical Boundaries

Other *ucs* defined the area statistically, using population as an indication of a sizeable settlement, town or urban area. Here the highest population used was The South West Study higher figure of, $\geq 10,000$, although this used two population figures;⁷ West Sussex Study (p.8) looked at settlements with a population $\geq 4,000$, and Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.7) used a figure of $\geq 3,000$.

This way of defining the total-urban-area defines 'urban' in statistical terms suggesting that other area characteristics, not well expressed in numeric terms, could be overlooked,⁸ and emphasising the population characteristics. All but the West Sussex Study were regional, and pre-dated 2000, which suggests that this definitional method was most useful at the larger and more strategic scale of regional land-use planning than the more detailed district level *ucs*. Moreover, all the *ucs* mentioned above used the Typical-Urban-Area method-type. *TiP* (p.19) suggested that the Typical-Urban-Areas method-type was most suitable at the regional level, and this finding may reflect the fact that these *ucs* are all regional studies, rather than the fact that this was the data that was available.⁹

This way of identifying the total-urban-area reflects a statistical approach to *uc*, emphasising technical calculations and numeric definitions. This constrains the concept of *uc* by ignoring other urban-area characteristics and dynamics, and by reducing the localities' information to that which can be expressed statistically. The previous chapter demonstrated that such expressions related more nearly to the Constrained Model. This is further endorsed by the *ucs*' method-type choices (see chapter 7).

Using demographic figures to determine the total-urban-area emphasises the statistical nature of the exercise, and suggests that the concept of *uc* is more about numbers than anything else and that total-urban-areas can be defined adequately in statistical terms.

This way of defining the total-urban-area is also exclusive, omitting the settlements with populations lower than the stated populations. In the case of Yorkshire and Humber Study

⁷ This use of two statistical definitions for the urban area came about primarily because the South West Study authors used a survey which identified urban areas as settlements with a population $\geq 10,000$, organised by the Conference Technical Working Party (see South West Study p.2), and they used another study looking at rural brownfield land which used settlements with a population $\geq 5,000$ (see South West Study, p.3).

⁸ This actually runs counter to much that can be found in all of these *ucs*, emphasising the complexity of the issues involved. Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.3) differentiates at the start between the premises of potential and capacity, South West Study suggests Level-of-Difficulty method-types and East Midlands Study Manual (main document, particularly Part 2 and p.60-68) considers the issues of *uc* and ways of bringing it forward.

⁹ Here an interesting future research study could investigate whether the level of authority, regional, district etc. has any influence on the method-types chosen to complete an *ucs*.

(p.7), this only excluded minor settlements (i.e. with a population <3,000). However, part of the South West Study originally excluded settlements with a population of up to 10,000. Therefore, settlements assessed in all the other *ucs*¹⁰ would originally have been excluded in the earlier contributing South West Study. Therefore, the figure chosen is very significant and here it should be remembered that the South West Study effectively extended their definition of 'urban' by reducing the settlement size down to $\geq 5,000$.

The Opportunity Model *uc* concept emphasises the need to maximise development-opportunities in urban areas. The other side to this coin is an objective to minimise development in rural areas. Where *ucs* have defined the total-urban-area using statistical boundaries the emphasis is on the scale of the settlements under investigation. Therefore, just as including the green belt in the administrative boundary definition implied an acceptance of rural development, so here including very small settlements might also imply rural development, and a move away from the Opportunity Model.

8.2.3 Policy Designated Boundaries

Another way of identifying settlements to be included in an *ucs* was to designate particular settlements as 'key' or 'principal,' linking this designation to policy. It was used by the Avon Study,¹¹ Hertfordshire Study, the Hart Study,¹² and the North East Arup Study.¹³

In each instance, these principal towns included good infrastructure and services and were pre-designated for future development by existing planning policy.¹⁴ This pre-designation suggests that the locational element of *uc* is policy determined prior to its assessment, which would seem constraining. Moreover, the development-opportunities not designated as 'key' or 'principal' were excluded. Therefore, where 'key' or 'principal' towns have been designated, this would appear to be constraining.

However as the emphasis appears to be on focusing development towards these towns and anticipates their changing, this suggests a proactive policy more closely aligned to the Opportunity Model.

¹⁰ E.g. the Yorkshire and Humber Study, and the South West Study.

¹¹ Avon Study (p.5-6) identified principal urban areas, adopted from draft RPG, as 'the contiguous urban area of Bristol conurbation and South Gloucestershire, including North Fringe and Kingswood, each with a unitary authority providing separate accounting.'

¹² The Hart Study identified 7 Key Settlements and in addition 13 villages with basic services.

¹³ Included the contiguous metropolitan area around Newcastle, Sunderland, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough as well as Darlington and Hexham- see figure 1 (no page number).

¹⁴ The Hart Study (p.6) cited their district plan, Avon Study (p.5) cited the Joint Replacement Structure Plan's locational strategy- policy 2, Hertfordshire cited Structure Plan at the time being reviewed (p.2) and the county's 'preferred strategy to regenerate main towns' (p.2), and North East Arup Study cited evolving Regional Planning Guidance (p.1).

8.2.4 Sustainable Boundaries

Some *ucs* emphasised the need for sustainable development patterns, suggesting that *uc* relates only to settlements thought to encourage such patterns.¹⁵ For example the South Hams Study,¹⁶ the Wychavon Study,¹⁷ the Avon Study,¹⁸ and the Leicestershire/ Leicester Study.¹⁹

All these *ucs* defined the total-urban-area as the 'sustainable option'. This was primarily presented on sustainable urban form grounds. Here the *ucs* accepted particular conceptual constructions of sustainable urban form, and of the ability of urban form to influence society's behaviour patterns to reflect more sustainable modes of living. These were treated as givens rather than assumptions, and reduced complex concepts such as sustainability, sustainable development, urban-area development and sustainable urban form to conceptual caricatures. However, this emphasis on the urban development as sustainable and the need to contain such settlements also fits the argumentation of the Opportunity Model.

8.2.5 Boundaries Defined by Local Features

Finally, the North West Study Manual emphasised the importance of local features in its definition of the total-urban-area in terms of the local features. It advised authorities to mark up the borough boundary, but then suggested that:

The definition of the urban area is based on the current character of the land rather than previously used or development plan designation.

North West Study Manual (1998), p.19

¹⁵ See chapter 2 for a synopsis of the discussion on sustainable development patterns and chapter 4 for how the government argued sustainability in their thinking on *uc*.

¹⁶ 'The district's area and local centres, [which] are those towns and large villages that may be considered for housing development in the local plan review and could contribute to the sustainable patterns of development' (South Hams Study:2001 p.2).

¹⁷ Wychavon Study par. 3.7 (no page number) argued its choice of three specific towns as 'relatively the most sustainable locations' and where sites in villages were included the villages were considered in the additional context of their accessibility/sustainability rating, determined during the Local Plan Review process. (Here the text actually says 'assessibility/sustainability rating', but this makes no sense and it is this research's opinion that it should read accessibility).

¹⁸ The Avon Study included smaller areas thought to 'have the potential for a degree of sustainable development within the framework of structure plan policies' (Avon Study p.5) and noted that 'sustainability should be at the heart of the process with a primary aim of developing residential areas that promote sustainable living patterns. This is unlikely to be achieved by considering the physical potential of an urban area alone.' (Avon Study p.1).

¹⁹ This *ucs* linked its total-urban-area to its transport model, and reflected on the development opportunities on chosen transport corridors thought to be sustainable.

It then advised that some types of area be discounted, including greenbelt, protected open land, sites which accord with this type that previously had a different use, and areas that are essentially undeveloped in character, and small settlements (<1,000 population or less than 4 Enumeration Districts) separated by more than 50m from other urban areas.

The way of defining the total-urban-area focuses on its characteristics, although the North West Study Manual also drew from other ways of defining the total-urban-area.²⁰ This total-urban-area definition also accords very nearly to the way the Cambridge Study and South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft) defined their area, excluding the greenbelt. Taken together, this emphasis on local characteristics, and on containing development, focusing it into larger settlements, both reflect the Opportunity Model, although here the consideration of settlements of <1000 allows the consideration of settlements other *ucs* consider rural.

To Sum Up: There are a number of ways to define the total-urban-area. These different ways may demonstrate different leanings within the *ucs* toward particular characterisations of the urban-areas or particular method-types at later stages. However the way the total-urban-area is defined does not govern these choices. This said, the total-urban-areas themselves are characterised by the way that they are defined, and this often suggests an emphasis toward one concept model or the other, e.g. the sustainable definition suggests the Opportunity Model.

However, the most important feature in determining this concept bias within the definition of the total-urban-area appears to be the total-urban-area's definitional parameters, e.g. excluding the greenbelt or settlements $\geq 15,000$. Here the more inclusive the definition, the more it accords with the Constrained Model, allowing smaller, more rural settlements to be considered, and thereby dispersing development-opportunities into these localities and away from larger settlements. This contradicts most other elements of the *ucs*, where greater inclusivity tends to equate to the Opportunity Model. That said, definitional boundaries drawn too tightly also prevent identifiably urban settlements from being included in the *ucs*; this too reflects a Constrained Model of *uc*.

²⁰ Through boundary definition and statistical definition.

8.3 Breadth: The Development-Opportunities

Chapter 5 demonstrated how the development-opportunities constituted an expression of *uc*, and indeed *uc* itself, through what was and was not included, and through the way that these inclusions were treated. Here the *ucs* will be analysed in the light of chapter 5 to consider these aspects against this research's concept-models.

It is important to remember, firstly, that some of these *ucs* are partial, and did not presume to be looking at *uc* in its entirety, only particular aspects of it. Nevertheless, these partial studies did indicate a perception that these development-opportunities are part of *uc*, and they often have influenced other *ucs* in their thinking on particular development-opportunities. Secondly, the *ucs* did not define the development-opportunities in the same way,²¹ and linked them together differently. This made it difficult to define precisely what development-opportunities were being considered.

TtP's suggested development-opportunities (p.10) indicated the government's concept of *uc* (see chapter 5), and the degree to which the *ucs* fitted these categories is the degree to which they agreed with the government's definitional thinking, and is reflected upon in the fit of the *ucs* to the development-opportunities.

Urbed's approach²² to the development-opportunities was that the wider the breadth of *ucs*' development-opportunities the wider their concept of *uc* (see *Figure 8.1*), unless this consideration was primarily dismissive, effectively narrowing the consideration. This analysis used a similar approach but also considered how the development-opportunities were characterised in its reflection on this expression of *uc*'s conceptualisation of *uc*. The development-opportunities in this research's survey set, organised in chronological order, are shown in *Figure 8.2*. In this table where the *ucs* focused on a development-opportunity only briefly it is highlighted in a lighter shade of grey, and where a development-opportunity was considered more deeply it was highlighted in a darker shade of grey. The publication of *TtP* in 2000 is represented as an emboldened line, to differentiate between pre-*TtP* and post-*TtP* *ucs*.

²¹ E.g. the West Sussex Study (Table 1.3.3) considered a wide variety of development-opportunities under the auspices of 'windfall', because it only looked at windfall and subdivided this one category into sub-categories more in keeping with other studies' development-opportunities. The North East Arup Study (p.10-12) looks at windfall as a separate category, and others do not look at it at all.

²² They went on to apply factors to the different development-opportunities based on their own research (Urbed p.30) to calculate the amount of urban capacity the study had looked at compared to what was there (i.e. the total of all the development-opportunities put together).

Figure 8.1 Urbed's findings on the completeness of ucs in their exploration of the different opportunities which might provide additional housing (taken from Urbed 1999 unpublished p.30)

	Vacant Sites					Other Development-Opportunities							Total Issues Covered	Estimated % Capacity Covered
	Large Sites	Small Sites	Housing Allocations	Industrial Allocations	Not Previously Developed	Redevelopment	Car-Parks	Non-Residential Conversions	Living Over the Shop	Residential Subdivision	Intensification	Empty Properties		
West Sussex													4	47 %
Chester	Not Applicable													
Yorkshire and Humber													6	37 %
Kent													5	36 %
London 1998/9*													10	89 %
Stroud													5	36 %
London- Large Sites													2	16 %
North East Region													7	63 %
London LOTS													1	16 %
Hertfordshire													5	42 %
South West Region													7	52 %
North West Region													8	72 %
Surrey													5	48 %
London SRQ													4	40 %
East Midlands													5	43 %
Coverage of Each Issue	7	11	5	11	4	3	2	7	4	8	9	3		

* This refers to the draft copy of the London 2000 Study

Figure 8.2. Table showing the development-opportunities considered in the different ucs (emboldened line denotes publication of TtP)

Study	Date	Subdivision of existing housing	Flats/Living over shops (LOTS)	Empty homes	Previously developed land and buildings	Intensification of existing areas	Redevelopment of existing housing	Redevelopment of car parks	Conversion of commercial buildings	Review of Existing Housing allocations	Review of other allocations in plans	Vacant land not previously developed	Open spaces	Redevelopment of existing uses	Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Live work
Wychavon Study	06/02	p.2	p.2	p.2	p.2	p.2	p.2	p.2	p.2	p.2	p.2	p.2				
Hart Study	02/02	p.27	p.26		p.27	p.27		p.14	p.14	p.6	p.14	p.26?	Np.14			
South Hams Study	11/01	p.6	p.6	p.4	p.4	p.4	p.6	p.6	p.4	p.4	p.4	p.4				
Avon Study	08/01	p.14	p.14	Np.7	p.7	p.13	p.12	p.7	p.14	p.7	p.7	p.7		p.12		
North East Litchfield Study	04/01	p.26		p.26	p.31	p.26			p.26	p.25	p.26		p.26			
Stoke Study (partial?)	?/01	p.4?	Np.8	Np.8	p.3		Np.8		p.3	p.4	p.5					
London 2000 Study	09/00	p.48	p.61	p.61	p.31	p.16	p.21	An 4*	p.23	p.86	p.39	?		p.32		p.49
Sheffield Study	05/00	p.6	p.6	p.6	p.5	p.	p.6	p.	p.	p.6	p.6		p.5			
South West Study	01/99	p.10	Ap.2 [†]		Ap.2 [†]	Ap.2 [†]	Ap.2 [†]	Ap.2 [†]	Ap.2 [†]	Ap.2 [†]	Ap.2 [†]	Ap.2 [†]	Ap.2 [†]		Ap.2	
Wolverhampton Study	1998															
Cambridge Study	12/98	p.9	p.11		p.9	p.13			p.10	p.8			p.11		p.18	
East Midlands Study Manual	11/98	p.1	p.66	p.68	p.1				C4							
ST Brownfield Study (?/98				5.0a				5.0a				5.0b			
Yorkshire & Humber Study	07/98	p.19	p.14			p.14		p.13	p.14			p.13	p.13			
London SRQ Study (partial)	?/98		Np.27		p.26	study			Np.27							
North East Arup Study	1/98	p.13	p.15	p.17		p.4	p.17	Np.25	p.14	p.4	p.28		Np.21			
North West Study Manual	1998	p.74	p.15	p.66	p.16	infill	p.77		p.48		p.44	p.15				
Halton Study	07/97	Np.93	Np.93		p.102	p.91		p.92	p.91	p.90	p.91		Np.94	p.92		
Leicestershire/Leicester Study	08/96	p.2	p.18		p2	infill	p.2	p.2	p.2		p.2	p.2	p.2			
West Sussex Study (partial)	06/96	p.12	p.12		p.12	p.12	p.12	p.12	p.12	Np.8	Np.2	p.12	p.12			
Hertfordshire Study	10/95	p.18	p.75			infill	p.18	p.62	13							
London 1994 Study	1994	p.10	p.60		p.9	p.10			p.60						p.26	

An 4* annex- in London 2000 Study Ap.[†] appendix in South West Study

Np.20 No (page number) indicates the study has stated that it will not look at the development-opportunity category

Shade of grey indicates the amount of space afforded to the development opportunity in the ucs (compared to other opportunities in the same study)

A darker shade indicates more attention given to it; a lighter shade indicates that it is addressed more cursorily

8.3.1 *The Fit of the UCS' Development-Opportunity Categories*

This research's development-opportunity categories, derived from *TtP*'s categories, are set out more fully in section 5. of this research. The *ucs*' development-opportunity categories fitted these research development-opportunities to varying degrees. This is largely, although not entirely, because many of these *ucs* pre-date *TtP*.

The pre-*TtP* *ucs* were very varied both in what they included, and the links that they made. The London 1994 Study (p.54-63) concentrated on large sites and small sites under the auspices of previously-developed-land, and linked housing and change-of-use conversions together under conversions; here they also included office development, and LOTS options.

One of the worst fitting *ucs* was the East Midlands Study Manual. This focused, firstly, on the different uses of different areas: residential, mixed use, commercial; and secondly, on particular regeneration opportunities and projects which increased the yield. Therefore this *ucs* covered many of the same development-opportunities, but did so very differently from *TtP*.²³ The Leicestershire/Leicester Study (p.2) also focused on different uses linked to development options, concentrating on intervention policy,²⁴ and the Hertfordshire Study (p.11) drew on these use and policy elements as well. Here the emphasis was on how existing development could be modified, converted, redeveloped, or re-planned.

The Yorkshire and Humber Study (Appendix 1) and the South West Study (Appendix 2) both focused on the development-opportunities' use first, e.g. commercial, residential, mixed use, community uses and other uses; and then considered their physical characteristics rather than the development options that the East Midlands Study Manual the Leicestershire/Leicester Study and the Hertfordshire Study considered.

In contrast, in the post-*TtP* *ucs*, particularly poor fits are the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study, which used existing data streams and extrapolated findings from these;²⁵ and the Stoke Study, which emphasised 'brownfield sites' throughout, and overtly excluded a number of development-opportunities from its consideration.²⁶

²³ This was also true with regard to the constraints categories see section 8.4.

²⁴ Here the East Midlands Study Manual (p.20-22) refers to the Leicestershire/Leicester Study, which would account for some of these similarities.

²⁵ These data streams include (i) Nathaniel Lichfield's Brownfield Study for the North East region, the North East Arup Study, (iii) the NLUD returns, and (iv) the current build rates (see p.4 in the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study).

²⁶ LOTS, empty homes, and the redevelopment of existing housing (see p.8 in the Stoke Study).

The other post-*TtP ucs* used the *TtP* development-opportunity categories at least as a base. Here the Wychavon Study (tabulated in Section 2) and South Hams (Annex 2) Study used all 11 categories without adaptation or addition. The Avon Study (p.12) used most of the development-opportunity categories unaltered, but extended the redevelopment-of-existing-housing-areas category to include the redevelopment of non-residential areas as well, renaming this the redevelopment-of-existing-areas. The Hart Study and the Sheffield Study used the categories as they were given, but altered the relationships between the development-opportunities within the categories.²⁷

Therefore, with a few exceptions, *TtP*'s categories have predominantly been adopted and are increasingly being used to define the perceived relationships between the development-opportunities, increasingly compartmentalising these relationships, although there is some evidence that these relationships and categories are still being challenged. However, the early *ucs*, without a checklist²⁸ available, demonstrated considerably more variety in terminology, in the connections they made, and in the implications they saw in these connections. Here, what seems to have been gained through the extension of the breadth of development-opportunities through the introduction of the *TtP* categories may have been lost in the *ucs*' diminished creativity, as they reflected on these development-opportunities (see section 8.4).

8.3.2 *The Range of the Studies*

The post-*TtP ucs* also related more closely to the range of development-opportunity categories listed in *TtP*. This again expressed the influence that government guidance had on authorities' thinking. A more surprising find was that a number of *ucs* looked at more development-opportunities²⁹ than *TtP* suggested, extending the breadth of the development-opportunities, effectively broadening the concept of *uc* and thereby reflecting an Opportunity Model understanding of *uc*.

²⁷ E.g. the Sheffield Study (p.3) assigned previously-developed-buildings to a redevelopment-of-buildings category, rather than keeping it in the previously-developed-land-and-buildings category suggested by *TtP* (p.12). Sheffield identified the remaining category as previously-developed-land, which included the redevelopment of single sites, and perhaps areas under other uses. Sheffield also linked all the vacant land together, whether it was allocated for housing, other uses, or not allocated at all.

²⁸ Indeed, often the early *ucs* provided the material from which the eventual checklist came about.

²⁹ E.g. London 2000 Study included Live-work units and Non Self-contained accommodation- here classed as homes-in- multiple-occupation as did London 1994 Study (p.15), Cambridge Study (p.10); The Avon Study (p.12) extends the redevelopment-of-existing housing to the redevelopment-of-existing-uses, allowing for the redevelopment of other development-opportunities types (besides housing) to produce housing.

In contrast the post-*TtP* Stoke Study noted it would exclude LOTS, empty-homes, and the redevelopment-of-existing-housing, and it omitted the redevelopment-of-car-parks, vacant-land-not-previously-developed and the intensification-of-existing-areas. Given that this *ucs* regarded itself as an *ucs*,³⁰ it focused on a very limited range of development-opportunities, constraining its ability to find *uc* and demonstrating a narrow understanding of the *uc* concept.

Many of the pre-*TtP* *ucs* did not consider a number of development-opportunity categories, notably: empty-homes, redeveloping-existing-housing-areas, redevelopment-of-car-parks, reviewing-existing-allocations (whether they were housing, or other allocated land), or vacant-land-not-previously-developed. All of these are considered more frequently in the later *ucs*, even if only to refute their claim for consideration.³¹

Most, if not all, of the *ucs* omitted some development-opportunity categories. Where these omissions occur, the particular *ucs* effectively omitted the development-opportunity category from its concept of *uc*, limiting it- i.e. reflecting the Constrained Model. Here the omissions occurred in three different ways: Firstly, the development-opportunity category was overtly excluded from the outset and the *ucs* clearly stated its intention to do this.³² Secondly, it was omitted without comment; and thirdly it was considered and then dropped.³³

Where these omissions were purposeful exclusions, it was often related to the purpose of the *ucs*, and demonstrated an understanding of *uc* which usually supported existing policy rather than policy exploration. Where they were omissions, the development-opportunity categories fell beyond the authority's understanding that they should be reflected upon, and demonstrated that they were not integral parts to the authorities' conceptualisation of *uc*; and where they were included at first, to be dropped later, this suggests that they were at least initially considered to be part of the *uc*, although the later exclusion results in their

³⁰ The title of the study is 'An Urban Capacity Study for Stoke-on-Trent 2001'.

³¹ E.g. Stoke Study suggested it was inappropriate to consider these development-opportunities in *ucs* due to the 'inherent uncertainties involved' (p.8).

³² E.g. West Sussex Study (p.7-8), through its express purpose to look at windfall sites, effectively excluded the review of land designations. The Halton Study (p.93-94) did not look at a number of development-opportunities because its purpose was related to the examination of sites for future housing and employment development, and Stoke Study (p.12) suggested that a number of opportunities fell beyond the *ucs* remit: LOTS, empty-homes and the redevelopment-of-existing-housing.

³³ E.g. the North East Arup Study (p.21-22) considered 'urban greenspace', and car parks (as part of town centres p.25), but subsequently dropped them, one on policy grounds (urban greenspace) and the other on the very limited amount it anticipated the source would actually contribute. The Hart Study took a similar approach to car parks, effectively rejecting it as a source because of its limited contribution; it too noted that it would not look at open space. The Cambridge Study (p.11) considered LOTS but did not include it in its calculation of *uc* at the end.

not being integral to the assessed *uc*, i.e. *uc* itself. In all instances, these omissions or exclusions are constraining although the level of constraint is dependent on the reason for the exclusion.

Looking across the timeline, a number of development-opportunity categories are now included which were previously not considered, notably: empty-homes, redevelopment-of-car-parks and reviewing-of-existing-allocations (housing or other use allocations). This suggests a widening in the definition of *uc*, firstly through simply widening their inclusions: and secondly through the need to alter patterns of planning thinking and process to incorporate them.³⁴ This is perhaps best demonstrated through the Stoke Study's exclusions, justified on the grounds that these particular development-opportunity categories fell beyond their usual planning remit.

The incidence of these development-opportunity categories at least being referenced, even if subsequently excluded, suggests that they are becoming more established as an integral part of the *uc* concept. This demonstrates a widening in the conceptualisation of *uc* over the survey period (1994-2002), although some of the earlier *ucs* e.g. Hertfordshire Study (p.19), London SRQ Study (p.17-21), East Midlands Study Manual (p.34-35), North West Study Manual (p.4-6), were already reflecting on development-opportunities related to regenerating urban areas and improving existing urban quality. That said, *Figure 8.2* shows that their range was more limited; and *TiP* still noted that their *ucs* demonstrated that more *uc* was found by developers in the same period than by the *ucs* identified.

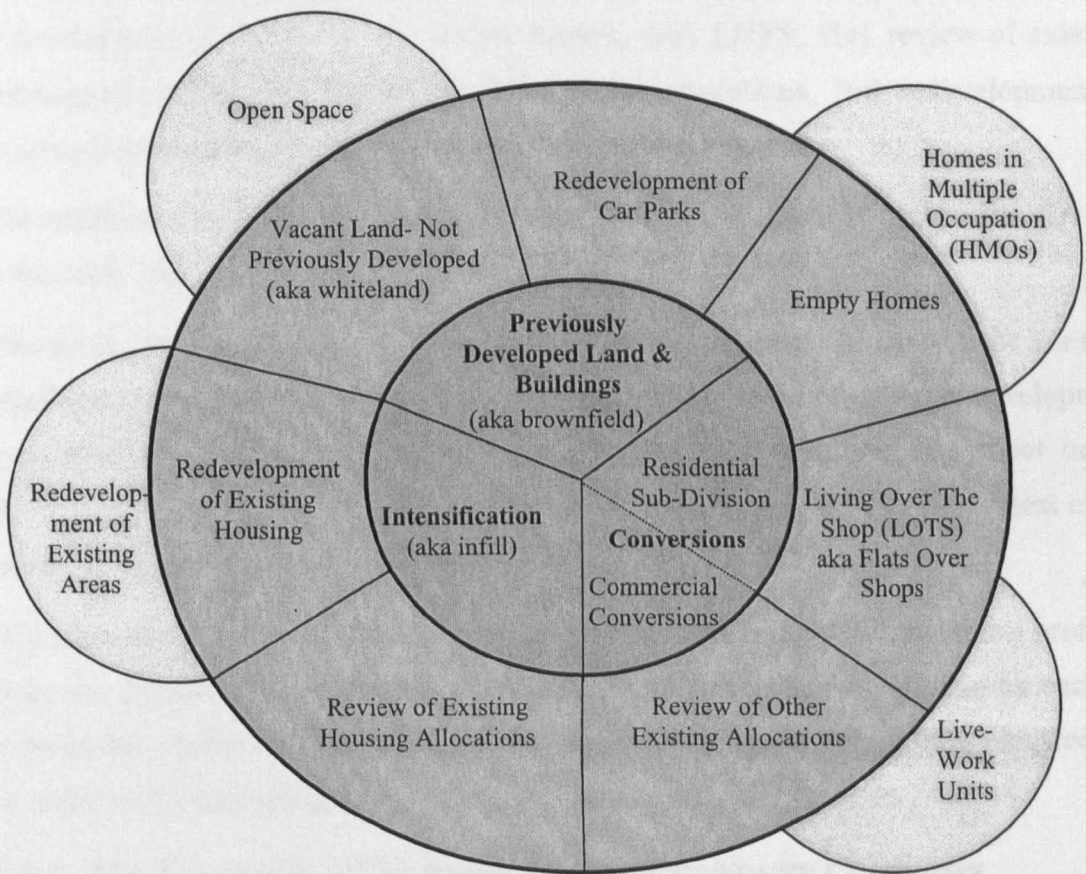
The range of the *ucs* now seems more fixed and broader than it was hitherto, although some extension has still been possible. Consequently, *uc* itself and its expression through the development-opportunities considered in the various *ucs* have both expanded, and the emphasis on constraint has diminished over the period 1994-2002. Nevertheless, some notable exceptions occur, suggesting that in some local authorities at least, a constrained concept of *uc* still prevails.

³⁴ E.g. empty homes have traditionally been considered the concern of the housing department not the planning department. Here there is an interesting research project exploring how local authorities are organising themselves to consider *uc* across their departments.

8.3.3 The Development-Opportunity Categories Diagram

As mentioned in chapter 5 (section 5.7.4), this summative table (see *Figure 8.2* above) provided this research with the basis of an alternative representation of *uc*, focusing on how often these development-opportunities are investigated in this research's *ucs* survey set (*Figure 8.3*). This can be compared against *TtP*'s conceptual definition (see *Figure 5.6*) which does not include some of the development-opportunity categories identified in the *ucs* and which emphasises all the development-opportunities equally. Therefore it slightly reshapes the conceptual understanding of *uc* as it was depicted by government (represented in *Figure 5.6*).

Figure 8.3 A representation of the concept of *uc* – based on the frequency³⁵ of the development-opportunities' identification in the survey of *ucs*



³⁵ 'Frequency' relates here to the frequency in the survey set of *ucs*; it does not relate to the frequency of the development-opportunities being mentioned in an individual study, or to the frequency rate in other surveys.

In completing this analysis, it was noted that some development-opportunity categories were used by all the *ucs*: these were considered by this research to be **core** development-opportunities, as all the *ucs* considered them; these are shown in the central circle of the diagram. Some of *TtP*'s categories were only considered by some of the *ucs*, and therefore these were considered by this research to be **peripheral** development-opportunity categories; these form the outer circle of the diagram. Some of the *ucs* introduced some development-opportunities of their own, not included in the *TtP* categories; these were considered by this research to be **additional** development-opportunity categories, and are shown on the diagram attached to the outer circle.

The **core** development-opportunity categories were: (i) previously-developed-land-and-buildings, (ii) intensification, (iii) residential-subdivision, and (iv) commercial conversions.

The **peripheral** development-opportunity categories were (in no particular order): (i) redevelopment-of-car-parks, (ii) empty-homes, (iii) LOTS, (iv) review-of-existing-housing-allocations, (v) review-of-other-existing-allocations, (vi) redevelopment-of-existing-housing and (vii) vacant-land-not-previously-developed.

The **additional** development-categories were (i) homes-in-multiple-occupation, (ii) live-work units, (iii) redevelopment-of-existing-areas and (iv) open space.

Effectively, the overall diagram represents a summative statement of the way the *ucs* taken together have appeared to represent *uc*, through their inclusion of different development-opportunities. This was set against the government's depiction, to reflect on the differences and their meaning in terms of the conceptualisation of *uc* in the context of this research's Opportunity and Constrained Models.

Of course, the diagram does not represent any one *ucs*, but using the diagram as a proforma base, any *ucs* can be characterised in this format, and a diagram was filled in for each *ucs* to assist the analysis of the individual *ucs*, although this information only repeated that provided in the summative table.

8.3.4 The Treatment of the Development-Opportunity Categories

This section looks in depth at the core development-opportunity categories one by one. This in-depth analysis demonstrates the premises on which these categories have been included in an *ucs*, in relation to the premises and argumentation of this research's concept-models. It then analyses the treatment of each of these development-opportunities within the *ucs* in relation to its premise for inclusion and the concept-models, and reflects

on how this might alter the bias of these development-opportunity categories' inclusion in an *ucs*.

This level of focus by the research on the core development-opportunities is partly because these development-opportunity categories are core, and partly to demonstrate how this section of the research was completed.

However, to reflect on all the peripheral development-opportunities in the same way would be too space-consuming, and repetitive. Here it was helpful that the inclusion of the peripheral development-opportunities into their respective *ucs* happened to reflect premises similar to each other. Consequently, this discussion has been structured around these premises.

Therefore, the peripheral development-opportunity categories' discussion starts by reflecting on these premises themselves, again in relation to this research's concept-models. It then sets up the premises, and highlights which development-opportunities drew from which premises, what this said about these development-opportunities in relation to the concept-models, and subsequently, how these development-opportunities were treated in the *ucs* (supported by *ucs* examples) and how this alters the bias of particular peripheral development-opportunity categories' inclusion in an *ucs*.

Finally, this section considers the additional development-opportunity categories. Here it reverts to considering each category one by one, completing the analysis in the same way as for the other development-opportunity categories.

8.3.5 The Core Development-Opportunity Categories

Figure 8.4 The core development-opportunity categories

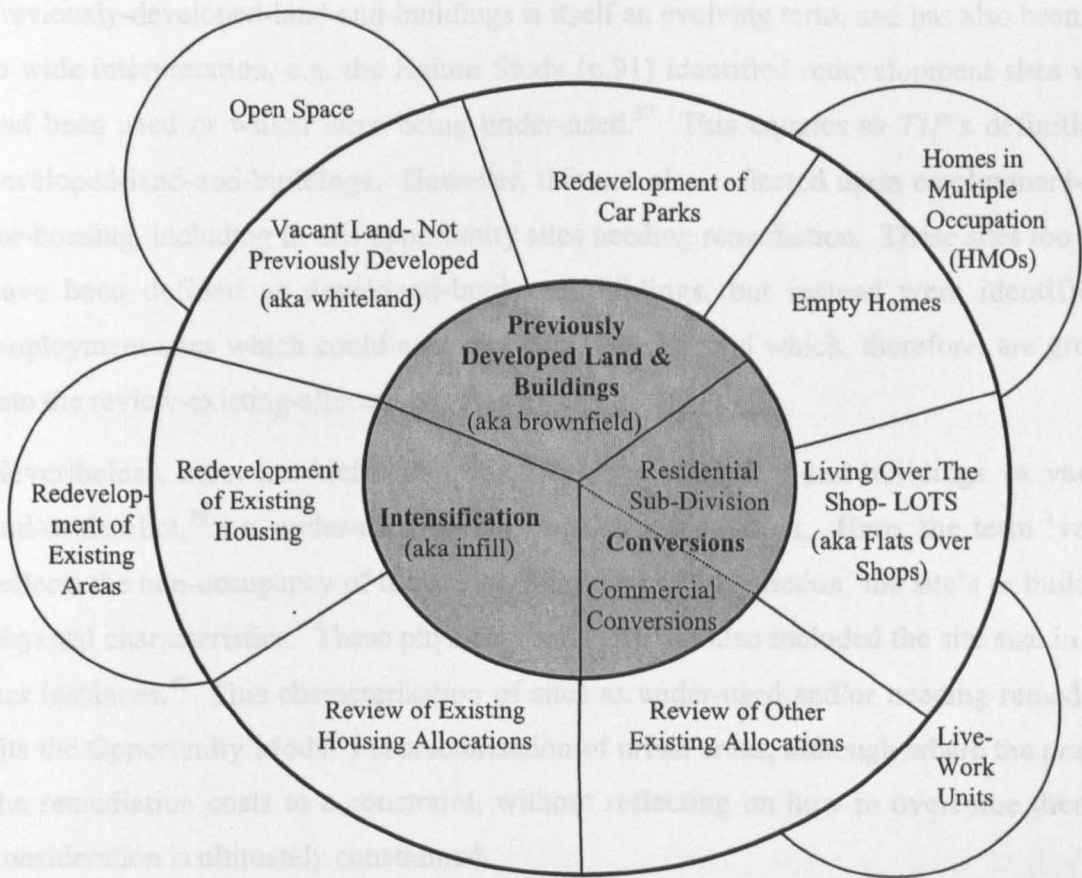


Figure 8.4 shows that core development-opportunity categories are (i) previously-developed-land-and-buildings, (ii) intensification (or infill), (iii) residential sub-division, and (iv) commercial-conversions-into-residential-units. As all *ucs* used these categories, they appear to be at the very heart of the concept, and could arguably be considered to be the minimum requirement for an *ucs* to assess, although such an assessment would be very narrow.³⁶

The Previously-Developed-Land-and-Buildings Development-Opportunity Category

This research will look at these development-opportunity categories in turn, starting with the previously-developed-land-and-buildings category. This previously-developed-land-and-buildings category implies urban under-use and urban regeneration, both themes in the Opportunity Model of *uc*. Consequently, the inclusion of the previously-developed-land

³⁶ *TiP* (p.10) offers 11 development-opportunity categories to be included in the consideration of *uc*, which could also be taken by some as a minimum requirement for the consideration of *uc*.

category as a core development-opportunity category suggests some acceptance of these themes by all the *ucs*.

Previously-developed-land-and-buildings is itself an evolving term, and has also been open to wide interpretation, e.g. the Halton Study (p.91) identified redevelopment sites which had been used or which were being under-used.³⁷ This equates to *TtP*'s definition of developed-land-and-buildings. However, this *ucs* also reflected upon employment-land-for-housing, including in this opportunity sites needing remediation. These sites too could have been defined as developed-land-and-buildings, but instead were identified as employment-sites which could accommodate housing, and which, therefore, are grouped into the review-existing-allocations category.

Nevertheless, most *ucs* defined previously-developed-land-and-buildings as vacant³⁸ and/or derelict,³⁹ i.e. under-used and/or needing remediation. Here, the term 'vacant' reflects the non-occupancy of the site or building; and 'dereliction' the site's or building's physical characteristics. These physical characteristics also included the site size in some *ucs* instances.⁴⁰ This characterisation of sites as under-used and/or needing remediation fits the Opportunity Model's characterisation of urban areas, although where the *ucs* limit the remediation costs to a constraint, without reflecting on how to overcome them, the consideration is ultimately constrained.

Many of the *ucs* considered previously-developed-land-and-buildings as a single category. One example was the Wychavon Study;⁴¹ another was the South Tyneside Brownfield Study. In this *ucs* the buildings were disregarded at the Yield-Assessment stage, therefore these 'vacant' sites were effectively treated as cleared, not just unoccupied, and the cost of

³⁷ At the time of the report.

³⁸ Reference for vacant sites: Yorkshire and Humber Study and South West Study characterised sites as vacant by using 'V' categories in their Typical-Urban-Areas method-types. Here two of the sub-category descriptions indicate that these sites are greenfield not previously-developed-land, which is more similar to vacant-land-not-previously-developed category discussed in *TtP* (p.16) than previously-developed-land. The third sub-category of vacant sites included derelict sites: former industry, former docks, 'special sites', landfill sites. Some of these 'vacant' sites still had buildings. So the vacant sites in this sub-category are previously-developed-land-and-buildings (see South West Study: table A2.1- no page number; and Appendix 1 Yorkshire and Humber Study- no page number), or alternatively Avon Study (p.7) - previously-developed-land and buildings now vacant, including derelict land and buildings and abandoned and unoccupied buildings in advanced state of disrepair.

³⁹ Yorkshire and Humber Study and South West Study characterise 'vacant' previously-developed-land and-buildings sites as 'derelict'- (see Yorkshire and Humber Study- Appendix 1 no page number; South West Study table A2.1-no page number, and Appendix 1).

⁴⁰ London 2000 Study (chapter 4 and chapter 5) and London 1994 Study (p.10) both differentiate between large and small sites, although the London 2000 Study then links these sites to conversions to give large sites and conversions and small sites and conversions as its development-opportunity categories.

⁴¹ E.g. the Wychavon Study (Section 2) put them together as vacant and derelict property, not distinguishing between buildings and sites at all.

redevelopment was assumed, but remained unexplored at the Constraint-Consideration stage.

However, as the issues for returning them to use are disparate, perhaps the category should be subdivided into two: previously-developed-land, and previously-developed-buildings. In a very few *ucs* this distinction has been made.⁴² Where this occurred, it facilitated the *ucs*' ability to consider the development-opportunities independently and in relation to their specific constraints, with a view to overcoming them; suggesting an orientation towards the Opportunity Model. However, this depth of analysis was not always achieved in the *ucs* in practice (see section 8.4).

The most important feature in determining the orientation of this development-opportunity category towards one of this research's concept-models or the other is the depth of the constraints consideration of this category (see section 8.4), rather than the inclusion of the category itself. However, this depth does not ensure an Opportunity Model consideration. For example, the Halton Study focused quite intensely on the sites' condition, paying particular attention to the remediation costs⁴³ and actively reflecting on the possibility of remediation rather than simply assuming that it was costly. In this analysis it concluded that remediation might be too costly for developers, but it did not consider possible policy initiatives that might be pursued to attract them, perhaps because in reality such policies may have been impossible fiscally and politically to pursue.

Therefore, previously-developed-land-and-buildings as a category seems to be an integral part of the *uc* concept, but that said it is usually treated as very problematic by the *ucs*, with a built-in assumption that development will be difficult and costly. This suggests a more constrained concept of *uc* than this category's inclusion might at first glance suggest.

The Intensification Development-Opportunity Category

The intensification development-opportunity category also implies urban under-use and a premise initially closer to the Opportunity Model of *uc*. *TtP* (p.13) limited intensification to infill opportunities, which includes the development of back gardens, backland, garage courts and other smaller areas of land sometimes overlooked as too insignificant to contribute. It does not include densification through higher densities being applied, which is seen as a policy function applied to the development-opportunity categories at the Yield-

⁴² E.g. the Sheffield Study (p.3) included recycling of previously-developed-land as a first category, and redevelopment-of-existing-buildings as a second one.

⁴³ The Halton Study (p.115) noted that many sites would be costly to remediate, and that remediation to achieve sites of sufficient quality for housing would be more costly than for employment.

Assessment stage (see chapter 7). Nor does this category include redevelopment-of existing-housing, which is treated as a separate development-opportunity in its own right.

Some *ucs* categorised some of these sites elsewhere.⁴⁴ This variation in categorisation had implications on the subsequent treatment of the development-opportunity. However, whichever way they are categorised they are still included by all the *ucs* and are consequently are included as a core development-opportunity category, central to the *ucs* concept of *uc*.

Although all the *ucs* did include the intensification development-opportunity category as a core category, many of them subsequently marginalised it through their treatment of it. Here a number of *ucs* limited their searches, e.g. only looking at sites >0.4ha (e.g. South Tyneside 2003 Study (Consultation Draft) or sites yielding >10 dw/ha (Wychavon Study, Hart Study).⁴⁵ This approach effectively marginalised the importance of this category and prevented its full consideration. Moreover, it also reasserted earlier planning assumptions, and reaffirmed the belief that these intensification development-opportunities were finite. Therefore, in many *ucs*, the treatment of this development-opportunity category reflects a Constrained Model concept of *uc*.

Other *ucs* limited the intensification development-opportunity category through their characterisations of the urban-areas, particularly when the *ucs* used the Typical-Urban-Areas method-type. Here *ucs*, and indeed *TtP*,⁴⁶ considered some urban-area types as being unable to accommodate further intensification, despite these *ucs* having subsequently depicted this development-opportunity category positively. This suggests that intensification does not occur equally or everywhere.

In contrast, the London SRQ Study (p.1-2) noted the surprisingly high potential of these sites when aggregated together, particularly when policies favouring their development were applied. This partial *ucs* demonstrated this potential through the Design-Led method-type applied at the Yield-Assessment stage. In this *ucs* an important feature of the method-

⁴⁴ E.g. London 1994 Study (p.8) included small sites (either ≥ 9 or 10 units, or ≥ 0.1 to 0.4 ha depending on the borough) as a sub-category of their previously-developed-land-and-buildings development-opportunity.

⁴⁵ It should be noted here that the Hart Study (p.6) considered these sites using a Trends method-type; and Wychavon Study suggested that it considered these sites as windfall- also using a Trends method-type (par. 3.3 Section 3). They also made the point (par. 8.4) that discussions with a named housing association were occurring at the time of the *ucs* with a view to developing some garage courts, but at the time of the study the discussions were still at an early stage, and consequently the garage courts were not included in the study's assessment of *uc*.

⁴⁶ Hertfordshire Study (p.26) excluded 1960s/70s private sector housing as not being conducive to infilling, or any other type of development, and therefore excluded it from further consideration. *TtP* suggested that well maintained Victorian terraced housing might be another type not likely to provide increased yields (*TtP* p.13). However, Hertfordshire Study (p.26) succeeded in infilling Victorian terraced housing.

types application was its ability to facilitate the consideration of intensification through the designs. This re-cast intensification as an idea, from the negative understanding of density and overcrowding, to the positive understanding of intensity and possibility; thereby opening up the possibility that the maximisation of this development-opportunity was positive.

Where *ucs* did not use designs, they still may have included a consideration of smaller sites (infill), e.g. the Avon Study, through an allowance for small sites for sites yielding <10 dw/ha:⁴⁷

...derived from the past pattern and scale of development on small sites and a consideration as to whether more of such opportunities should be encouraged through the relaxation of planning standards

Avon Study (2001), p.8

This suggests that the intensification development-opportunity category is seen to be a core development-opportunity, which should be included. However, whilst some *ucs* demonstrated that it could be found and explored proactively, many *ucs* demonstrated that this development-opportunity was often constrained, through their choice of method-types and their subsequent application of these method-types.

Conversions

Here, conversions relate to two of the development-opportunity categories: residential subdivisions, and commercial-conversions. They have been presented together here because some *ucs* treated them as a single category.⁴⁸ However in most instances, and in *TtP* itself, the categories are kept separate, as subdivisions of existing housing (p.11) and conversion of commercial buildings (p.14).

Both residential subdivisions and commercial-conversions development-opportunity categories challenge the premise of finite capacity, by anticipating that buildings of whatever type are under-used, and furthermore, that they can be better used through subdivision or by changing their use to housing. Therefore, as core development-opportunity categories, they both appear to favour the Opportunity Model concept of *uc*.

⁴⁷ I.e. those sites treated as windfall by the Wychavon Study.

⁴⁸ E.g. London 1994 Study (p.10) and North East Arup Study- although the North East Arup Study did subdivide the categories in its further analysis (p.13-14) but then reunited them into a single category when considering the policy/property market considerations (p.15) and the *uc* implications of conversions (p.16).

The Residential-Subdivision Development-Opportunity Category

The residential-subdivision development-opportunity category includes the subdivisions and extensions of residential property, including garage conversions, which result in a net gain in housing stock,⁴⁹ though one *ucs*⁵⁰ did discuss the possibility of net loss.⁵¹ The 'net gain' discussed in *ucs* is either defined as a site net gain,⁵² or alternatively as a development-opportunity category net gain.⁵³ Nevertheless, whichever way it is presented, it still assumes under-use and the ability to derive more dwellings from the more efficient use of existing buildings- reflecting the Opportunity Model.

Many *ucs* used Trends method-types – usually taken from planning permissions given to this type of development in the past.⁵⁴ However, some *ucs* used Yardsticks method-types, as suggested by *TtP*,⁵⁵ but within these yardsticks, other conditions may be attached, which reduce their findings.⁵⁶

Therefore, although this development-opportunity is perceived to be a core development-opportunity, and although it implies an acceptance of the Opportunity Model's conceptual construction, its treatment, with its emphasis placed as it is on past conditions rather than within the context of *PPG3:2000* and smaller households, reflects thinking more in keeping with the Constrained Model.

The Commercial-Conversions Development-Opportunity Category

Commercial-conversions development-opportunity category also represented urban-areas and buildings as under-used. However as a development-opportunity category it also contained a presumption that it was desirable enough, and that commercial buildings are adaptable enough to convert them into housing. This effectively privileges housing uses over other uses, which reflects the thinking found in this research's Opportunity Model.

⁴⁹ I.e. 1 dwelling is subdivided into 2 or more dwellings to give a net gain of 1 or more dwellings.

⁵⁰ The Cambridge Study (p.10).

⁵¹ Where a family house which had been subdivided into flats was returned to its original form, effectively reducing the number of dwellings, contributing a net loss to the total number of dwelling units.

⁵² Relating to the gain on a particular site taking into consideration the loss of houses being converted.

⁵³ Relating to the gain across the whole development-opportunity category, taking into account the loss of dwellings caused by the undoing of earlier dwelling subdivision.

⁵⁴ E.g. South Hams Study (p.6).

⁵⁵ Here one of the best examples is probably the North East Arup Study (p.14). This included determining how many large houses were eligible for subdivision, usually derived from the size of property in the first instance, and in some cases the under-use of property in the second.

⁵⁶ The North East Arup Study (p.14) also included the need to protect some of the existing family stock for family housing (50%), thereby markedly reducing the source supply before any calculations could be carried out.

Where the commercial-conversions development-opportunity category was considered, it was often portrayed as a single category; and this was particularly true in the more recent *ucs*.⁵⁷ This is probably due to *TtP* offering a more general category. In some *ucs* this development-opportunity category was widened to include the conversion of non-residential buildings, which allowed the consideration of development-opportunities in buildings not strictly classed as commercial buildings.⁵⁸ This widening of the category suggests a widening of the concept of *uc*, reflected in the Opportunity Model.

Whilst *TtP* suggested that the conversion of commercial buildings to housing should be considered, it does not indicate whether all commercial buildings or only some should be included at the outset, nor does it indicate how this proportion should be determined. This is left to the discretion of those completing an *ucs*. In the event, no *ucs* started with an assumption that all commercial buildings would be converted. Instead, one way or another, they included a proportion. In some instances this was determined through identifying possible opportunities at the Survey stage, in others it was determined by reflecting on past trends and in still others it was included in the yardsticks or assumptions that the *ucs* used to calculate the yield.

The *ucs* explored this development-opportunity category in different ways. Some *ucs*⁵⁹ used Typical-Urban-Area method-type linked to yield assumptions⁶⁰ to ascertain the yield of each specific type of opportunity. Others used Designs to explore the opportunity presented by particular types of building,⁶¹ whilst still others used Yardsticks:⁶² the method-type suggested by *TtP* (p.27-28). In the more recent *ucs* these commercial buildings were usually considered on a site-by-site basis, and many of them have subsequently been discounted on the basis of the site conditions, rather than the development-opportunity category's constraints.

Within this broad commercial-conversions development-opportunity category, many *ucs* introduced sub-categories, e.g. most *ucs* reflected on converting offices,⁶³ warehousing and

⁵⁷ Sheffield Study (p.3), South Hams Study, Hart Study.

⁵⁸ E.g. North West Study Manual (Appendix A) and South West Study (Appendix 2) included the consideration of community buildings as well.

⁵⁹ E.g. South West Study (Appendix 5), Yorkshire and Humber Study (Appendix 4).

⁶⁰ These yield assumptions were not unlike the yardstick formulae found in the Yardsticks method-types.

⁶¹ E.g. North West Study Manual (Appendix A).

⁶² E.g. Hertfordshire Study (p.87 for LOTS and p.88 for Older Office Accommodation).

⁶³ E.g. London 1994 Study (p.60)- very briefly, London 2000 Study (p.23-25), North East Arup Study. (p.15), Hertfordshire Study (p.88), East Midlands Study Manual (p.67), Avon Study (p.14).

other industrial buildings,⁶⁴ and to a lesser extent community buildings.⁶⁵ Many *ucs* also considered LOTS here as a sub-category.⁶⁶ However, this research will consider LOTS as a separate category, as indicated by *TtP* (p.27). The earlier *ucs* were particularly inclined to consider these sub-categories individually, within the context of the wider category, rather than as a single category, as found in the later *ucs*.⁶⁷ These *ucs* (which sub-categorised) frequently drew on other *ucs*' information as a reference to determine how these development-opportunities could be understood,⁶⁸ and had a tendency to apply these findings as if the *ucs* locality would perform in the same way.⁶⁹

The *ucs* considered these sub-categories in relation to the constraints that applied to them specifically. For example, the East Midlands Study Manual (p.67) reflected on their office and housing markets in comparison to London and in relation to each other. Here they noted that the office market had to be less buoyant than the housing market to encourage the transfer of office space into housing space; and the Cambridge Study (p.11) noted that the shortage of local industrial opportunities⁷⁰ prevented their conversion into housing. Cambridge also noted (p.10) that there was also residential conversion into commercial space, and that therefore the calculation should be a net one rather than a gross one.

This raises an important point about the presumption of under-use, as conversion is driven by the profitability of development. Where a property sector, for example the office sector, is performing less profitably than the residential sector, it is possible that conversion into housing may occur even in occupied property, belying the idea of under-use. Yet conversion from commercial to residential use was advocated by *TtP*. Nevertheless, too much of this conversion could undermine the provision of accommodation for other necessary urban land-uses- as Cambridge appeared to be finding

⁶⁴ East Midlands Study Manual (p.49-53), Cambridge Study (Appendix 1 p.18).

⁶⁵ E.g. South West Study (Appendix 2), Yorkshire and Humber Study (Appendix 1).

⁶⁶ E.g. North West Study Manual (see p.15 and design 52 Appendix A) and the Hertfordshire Study (p.75 and p.87); both look at LOTS as part of their exploration of the commercial-conversion development-opportunity category.

⁶⁷ The Hertfordshire Study considers LOTS (p.75 and p.87) and offices (p.88) the Cambridge Study considers warehousing, offices and LOTS (p.9-11); the North East Arup Study considers offices and LOTS (p.14-15). East Midlands considered commercial conversions (p.49-53) but looked more specifically at offices (p.67) and LOTS (p.63-65).

⁶⁸ E.g. the East Midlands Study Manual (p.67), North East Arup Study (p.15), South Tyneside Brownfield Study all drew on Barlow and Gann's 1993 report for London on office conversion into flats and apply its findings.

⁶⁹ However the East Midlands Study Manual (p.67) compares the local office market against London's performance, and does not simply assume London will be the same as the East Midlands.

⁷⁰ Expressed in market terms, demonstrated by the rapid take-up of industrial space.

in the manufacturing sector, and this could eventually resulting in the desirability of housing conversions being challenged.

Moreover, the examples highlighted above challenge the rather generic premise of urban under-use to indicate its inequality both geographically and sectorially, and indeed demonstrate that in some localities and sectors the opportunities might be overstretched. This undermines the presumption of privileging housing over other uses, and reasserts other uses' claims for urban space and the need to heed these claims. In challenging these premises, the assumptions contained within the commercial-conversion development-opportunity category are effectively muted, and they begin to be characterised in more restricted ways, closer to this research's Constrained Model.

That said, the inclusion of these sub-categories allows the consideration of the initiatives to overcome these constraints. For example, the East Midlands Study Manual considered different types of conversion schemes which encouraged under-used commercial buildings to be converted into residential property. Where such considerations occur in an *ucs*, it suggests an acceptance of the Opportunity Model concept of *uc*.

At the Constraint-Consideration stage, the later *ucs*⁷¹ tended to look at the commercial-conversions development-opportunities very specifically at site level, often discounting them on site related grounds. This suggests a pattern within these *ucs* of categorising these development-opportunities very generically -within the commercial-conversion category- at the Survey stage where they are first identified, and then treating these generic opportunities very specifically, identifying individual sites and buildings in the second. Often, this site-specific emphasis at the Constraints-Consideration stage resulted in heavy discounting (as demonstrated in chapter 7), perhaps constraining the *uc* assessment disproportionately. This said, the *ucs*' early generic classification of the sites in the first instance does not lend itself to the consideration of these sites as sub-categorised development-categories, e.g. offices, retail buildings, warehousing, which can then be discounted proportionately,⁷² and which might be better able to accommodate the differing impacts of different constraints of the different commercial development-opportunities being explored.

To Sum Up: These core development-opportunity categories provide perhaps the narrowest assessment of *uc* that could possibly be considered. However, even these

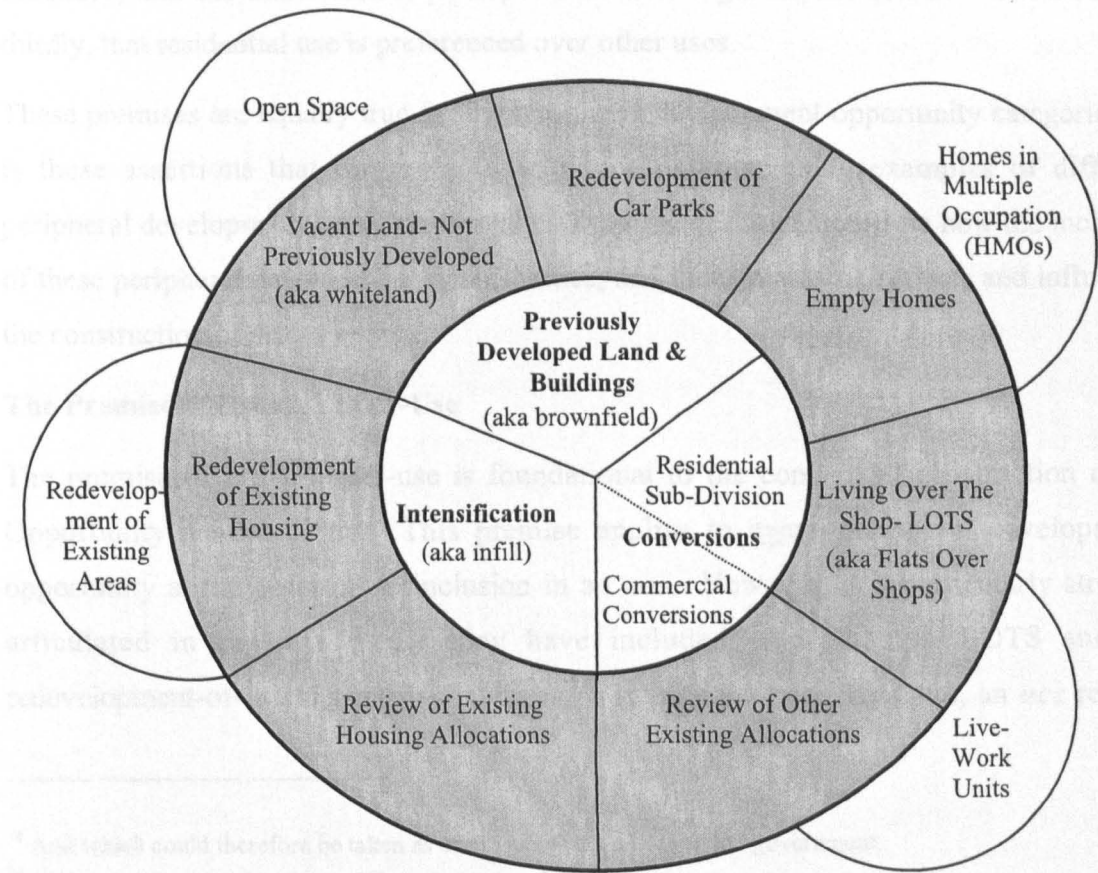
⁷¹ This may in part be related to the fact that more of this research's *ucs* survey set are local and district rather than regional, rather than to the fact that these studies are more recent.

⁷² E.g. the Wychavon Study, the South Hams Study.

categories' inclusions indicate a widening in thinking from the previous land-availability-studies⁷³ toward something that resembles *uc*. Indeed many of these development-opportunity categories rest on assumptions more closely related to the Opportunity Model, notably the assumption of urban under-use, and the assumption of the predominance of housing over other uses. However, the subsequent treatment of these development-opportunities within the *ucs* tend to re-establishing more constrained conceptualisations of *uc*. This is primarily achieved through the treatment of these development-opportunities, challenging these development-opportunity categories' portrayal of the urban area as under-used and the privileging of housing over other uses, foundational to the Opportunity Model; instead, they reinstate the foundational presumption of finite capacity found in the Constrained Model of *uc*.

8.3.6 The Peripheral Development-Opportunity Categories

Figure 8.5 The peripheral development-opportunity categories



⁷³ With its emphasis on greenfield development.

The peripheral development-opportunity categories include all the development-opportunities mentioned in *TiP*⁷⁴ but not in all of the *ucs*⁷⁵ (see *Figure 8.5*). Here, the later *ucs* tended to draw on *TiP*'s categories,⁷⁶ although even amongst these, not all the development-opportunity categories were considered.⁷⁷

The peripheral development-opportunity categories suggest a widening of the concept of *uc*, reflected through the wider number of development-opportunity categories being considered. This implies an Opportunity Model construction of *uc*.

Given the number of peripheral development-opportunities, and the limited amount of space available, it has been necessary to structure the analysis of these development-opportunities differently from how the core development-opportunities' analysis was presented. As demonstrated above through the core development-opportunities' analysis, in most instances the inclusion and consideration of the different development-opportunity categories is underpinned by an understanding of the following premises: firstly, that the urban-area is under-used, and in need of additional development activity in some instances; secondly, that the urban area is perhaps in need of regeneration in other instances; and thirdly, that residential use is preferenced over other uses.

These premises are equally true for the peripheral development-opportunity categories. It is these assertions that the research will now explore, using examples of different peripheral development-opportunities taken from the *ucs* to demonstrate how the inclusion of these peripheral development-opportunities, and their treatment, reflects and influences the construction of *uc*.

The Premise of Urban Under-Use

The premise of urban under-use is foundational to the conceptual construction of the Opportunity Model of *uc*. This premise applies to every peripheral development-opportunity at the point of its inclusion in an *ucs*. However, it is particularly strongly articulated in the *ucs* where they have included empty-homes, LOTS and the redevelopment-of-existing-residential-areas.⁷⁸ In each of these instances, an *ucs* reflects

⁷⁴ And which could therefore be taken as core sources according to the government.

⁷⁵ Although of course they have all been considered in some *ucs*.

⁷⁶ And therefore many of the sources classed as peripheral might have been classed as core if the survey had been limited to *ucs* after 2000.

⁷⁷ E.g. Stoke Study does not consider LOTS, redevelopment-of-residential-areas etc.; North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study does not look at sites already designated as employment or housing sites.

⁷⁸ Although of course the lack of use in other development-opportunities e.g. empty office blocks, vacant industrial land etc. also imply urban under-use.

upon the under-use of existing residential property, and contained in each of these development-opportunity categories is the notion that it is indeed under-used.

As already indicated, LOTS has often been reflected upon in *ucs* under the guise of commercial-conversion,⁷⁹ characterising the under-used space as shop space. However, Petherick and Fraser (1992) distinguished between under-used shop space, which required conversion, and under-used residential space, which needed renovating. Here they highlighted the under-use of existing flats above shops, as well as the under-use of upper storey storage space linked to the commercial uses below. They suggested that these different development-opportunities needed very different approaches and policy initiatives,⁸⁰ and indicated the need for quite different approaches and policy initiatives to be actively adopted to utilise these different types of space for residential use. Nevertheless, however LOTS is categorised (as commercial or residential), it is still characterised as under-used and able to contribute to the calculation of *uc*.

Empty-homes development-opportunity also clearly indicates a premise of under-use, with some emphasis being placed on empty homes strategies to assist in the take-up of this spare capacity. In many instances the *ucs* used 3% vacancy as an acceptable benchmark (taken from *Our Future Homes*), which takes account of the need for some vacancy to allow for stock to turn over. Therefore, any empty homes over 3% reflect this urban under-use.

The redevelopment-of-residential-areas development-opportunity category often overlaps with the empty-homes development-opportunity category because this redevelopment is usually directed towards the areas with higher residential vacancy, in an effort to return it to use. In these instances, many *ucs*⁸¹ noted that the redevelopment of these residential areas often reduced the housing stock,⁸² and that consequently the reduction of empty homes to 3% may in part reflect this demolition and non-replacement of existing stock, and not simply be due to improved take-up. However, it could be argued that if there is a reduction of stock and improved take-up (in real terms), then this is additional evidence

⁷⁹ E.g. North West Study Manual (see p.15 and design 52 Appendix A) and the Hertfordshire Study (p.75), both looked at LOTS as part of their exploration of the commercial-conversion development-opportunity category.

⁸⁰ Petherick and Barnett's Stockton-upon-Tees Study reflected on the different types of LOTS space that existed and considered different ways of bringing this forward.

⁸¹ South West Study notes a negative yield against this particular typical-urban-area type (R7 High-rise 6+ storeys), but saw some gains in R5 estate housing (see Table 9 p.27).

⁸² I.e. redevelopment schemes often built at lower densities, so that more dwellings were demolished than built, resulting in net loss.

that the area was previously under-used and needed a dramatic initiative to bring it back into use. This would fit with the Opportunity Model.

The Premise of the Need for Regeneration

This leads to the second premise underpinning both the Opportunity Model and the examination of some of these development-opportunity categories: the need for regeneration, and the presumption that this can be housing-led. Within the *ucs*, this presumption is most evident in the redevelopment-of-residential-areas, and is also apparent in the consideration of LOTS, through the renovation likely to be necessary as part of bringing this often poorly maintained space back into use; and also in the consideration of empty homes, through improved management strategies. In most of these instances, these development-opportunities need proactive policy to invigorate the local area, and to revitalise the city.

Where the redevelopment-of-residential-areas is deemed necessary, it would seem a very proactive programme, perhaps only justified where the area is clearly run-down, but this development category has been raised in a number of *ucs*.⁸³ This consideration of regeneration through housing redevelopment clearly suggests a consideration of this development-opportunity in terms of a mutually beneficial relationship between the city and housing provision, through which, via the improvement of the existing housing stock and/or the provision of additional housing, the local area and the city as a whole might be regenerated. This reflects an Opportunity Model construction of *uc*.

Some *ucs* did little to reflect on the policies or initiatives that might be needed to regenerate the residential areas identified, but nonetheless accepted their existence and anticipate a contribution to the *uc* assessment from this development-opportunity.⁸⁴ However, some *ucs* actively refute the need for redevelopment, usually suggesting that the current levels of vacancy and the quality of the stock do not warrant such proactive action, effectively denying under-use and the need for regeneration, and thereby establishing the finite capacity of the Constrained Model.

⁸³ E.g. East Midland Study Manual (Part 2), Hertfordshire Study (p.41-43), North East Arup Study (p.18), North West Study Manual (p.77-78), Leicestershire/Leicester Study, with perhaps the most consideration of possible proactive initiatives being put forward in the East Midland Study Manual.

⁸⁴ South Hams Study calculated this contribution using past trends including the redevelopment of commercial and employment sites in its calculation (see p.6). This development-opportunity is closer to Avon Study's category of redevelopment-of-existing-uses. Its trend projection, and lack of discussion on the necessary policies or initiatives that would be necessary to redevelop these residential areas, suggest that the South Hams Study did not consider any policies necessary for redeveloping the residential areas.

The Preference of Housing Over Other Uses

A third premise on which these development-opportunity categories' inclusion to an *ucs* is founded, and which also indicates the Opportunity Model of *uc*, is the preference of housing over other uses. This premise is visible in many of these peripheral development-opportunity categories, but is particularly visible in the review-of-other-allocations, the redevelopment-of-car-parks, and the consideration-of-vacant-land-not-previously-developed. In each of these instances, the premise is that housing is a better use of the land than the existing use.

The review-of-other-allocations in plans was included in all the most recent *ucs*, but was missed in many of the earlier *ucs*, usually on the grounds that the opportunity was needed for its designated use.⁸⁵ The Halton Study included a review of the allocated employment sites⁸⁶ and reflected on the demand for employment sites as part of its determination of their availability. This clearly expressed the importance of other uses, besides housing, However, the fact that these other allocations were explored indicates a willingness to allow housing to predominate where appropriate, on the basis of housing and employment land demand and the quality of the land supply.⁸⁷

In contrast, many *ucs* did not consider the redevelopment-of-car-parks in the same way. As with all the peripheral development-opportunity categories, some *ucs* do not consider the development-opportunity at all; but of the ones that do, some dismiss their consideration relatively quickly.⁸⁸ Therefore many *ucs* do not consider the take-up of central car-parking for housing as viable in terms of allowing the town centres to function.

This creates an interesting contradiction between some of the Survey and Yield-Assessment method-types and the way this development-opportunity is applied. The method-types have been directed toward encouraging a transport modal-switch -from car to public transport. This is achieved through locating housing around well-serviced areas and on public transport corridors, in conjunction with the reduction of car-provision for new-build housing. The viability of such options is demonstrated through design

⁸⁵ E.g. the West Sussex Study (p.7-9) indicated that it would not challenge these allocations.

⁸⁶ Section 8 of the Halton Study.

⁸⁷ E.g. the Halton Study (p.115) made the point that sites had to be remediated to a higher standard for housing than employment use, and in some instances this might make a site that could be developed for employment undevelopable for housing.

⁸⁸ For example the North East Arup Study dismissed them on the grounds of their limited contribution (p.25), whilst the South Hams Study (p.6) indicated the need to maintain sufficient car-parking in central locations, for the largely rural population to be able to access these urban centres.

examples, which show how this car-parking reduction can enhance the environment.⁸⁹ However, the application of this development-opportunity in the *ucs*, effectively preserving central car-parking space, appears to fly in the face of these method-type assumptions, as it encourages the continuation of car-use by providing car-parking space at the destination point.

The Presumption of Altering Policy

Finally, the inclusion of these peripheral development-opportunities assumes that policy will be changed, on the basis that the premises of under-use, the preference for housing, and the need for regeneration are true. All these peripheral development-opportunities rely on a change in policy position to be assessed in the *ucs*. For some, notably the review-of-existing-housing-allocations and the review-of-other-existing-allocations, this change in policy position is reflected in their inclusion, challenging as this does their existing planning designation.

It also, incidentally, challenges the regulatory function and process of plans, which designate uses to particular sites, and then adhere to these designations for the plan duration, using them as possible reasons to challenge future planning applications. In these development-opportunity categories' inclusion, a shift in thinking is apparent where policy is explored in the Constraints-Consideration stage (see chapter 7.6). Here policy has moved from a regulatory development control role to a proactive regeneration initiative function.

For other development-opportunity categories also (empty-homes, LOTS, and the redevelopment-of-existing-housing-area), policy is characterised as dynamic and proactive, with the ability to change the stock, the area and the city itself through better housing management⁹⁰ and through clearance programmes and renovation, although the treatment of these development-opportunities may not fully realise this proactive stance.⁹¹

To Sum Up: The inclusion of these peripheral development-opportunities has truly widened the conceptualisation of *uc* outwards, not simply through widening the types of development-opportunity out, thereby increasing the likely yield, but also through the acceptance of the need to assess these development-opportunities, thereby effectively

⁸⁹ London SRQ Study (p.34).

⁹⁰ The London 2000 Study (p.61) only considered empty homes in the context of the area having a vacancy rate greater than 3% and a strategy to bring homes back into use.

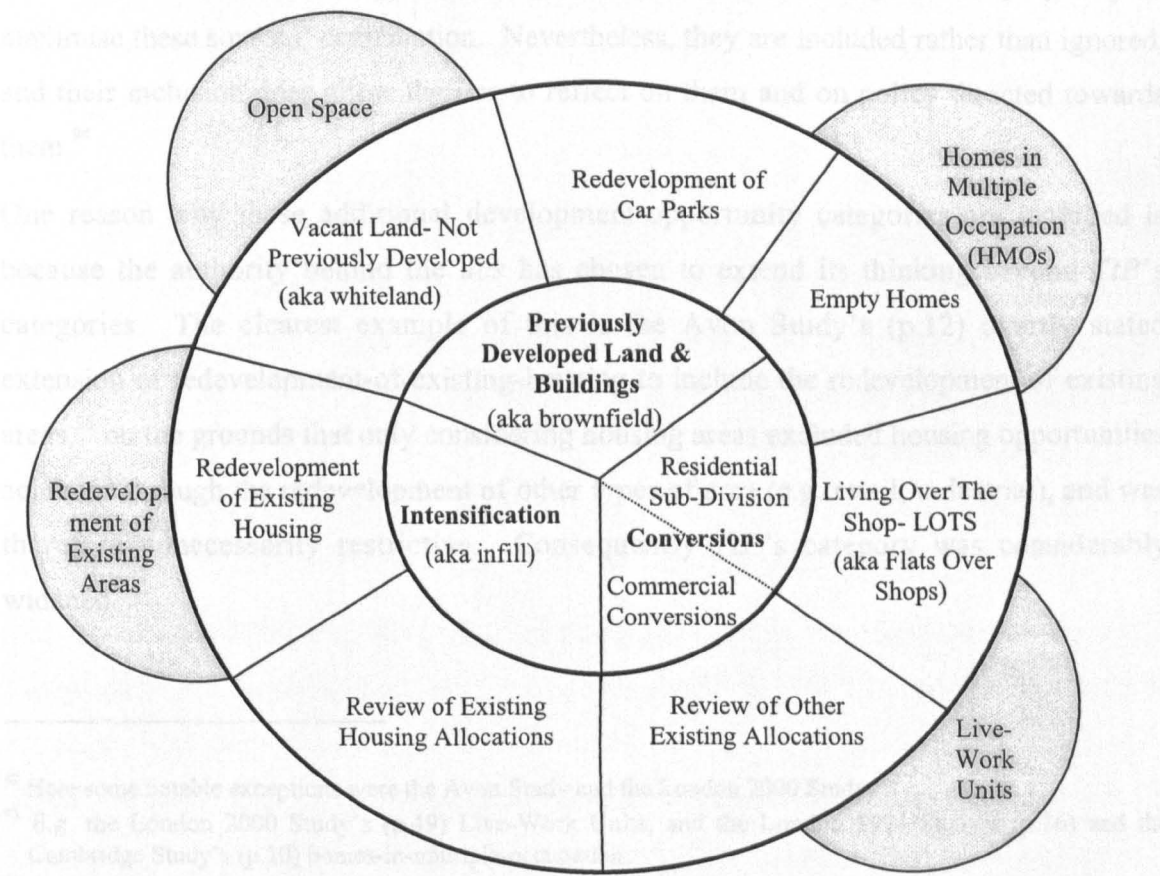
⁹¹ E.g. Stoke Study (p.8) suggested that these proactive positions were beyond the remit of the study because their impact was difficult to gauge.

changing the stance on particular ideas related to them. These ideas themselves are foundational to the underlying premises of *uc*, the function of policy, of *uc* as a concept, and of the *ucs*, and the orientation of these in relation to this research's concept-models towards the Opportunity Model.

This does not mean that the inclusion of these peripheral development-opportunity categories necessarily results in an acceptance of this shift, as in many instances the characterisation and subsequent treatment of the development-opportunities may re-establish previous positions, but it does indicate an increasing need to question the position previously held, and a growing requirement to provide a justification for maintaining it rather than exploring alternatives. This suggests a move towards a more open consideration of *uc* in keeping with the Opportunity Model, although in many instances the shift may be half-hearted.

8.3.7 Additional Development-Opportunity Categories

Figure 8.6 The additional development-opportunity categories



The additional development-opportunities are extensions to the government thinking, by the authorities behind the *ucs* which present these extensions. Consequently, where these additional development-opportunity categories occur, they demonstrate a more encompassing understanding of *uc* than the government's, based on local circumstances. This suggests an Opportunity Model understanding of *uc*, and is something that *TtP* welcomed, in its aspiration that authorities would continue to explore other possibilities (see *TtP* p.5). However, the more recent *ucs* (post-*TtP*) appear to have been less explorative than the earlier *ucs*.⁹² Nevertheless, where *ucs* have considered additional development-opportunities, questions arise about the reasons for their identification and inclusion; then, as elsewhere, about how they have been characterised and treated, with a view to establishing what this says about the understanding of *uc* as a concept.

The additional development-opportunity categories include newly observed development-opportunities occurring in particular localities, and contributing to the housing stock.⁹³ Consequently, their inclusion into an *ucs* is more descriptive and perhaps reactive: reflecting on what is already happening, than proactive: seeking to change policy to maximise these sources' contribution. Nevertheless, they are included rather than ignored, and their inclusion does allow the *ucs* to reflect on them and on policy directed towards them.⁹⁴

One reason why these additional development-opportunity categories are included is because the authority behind the *ucs* has chosen to extend its thinking beyond *TtP*'s categories. The clearest example of this is the Avon Study's (p.12) overtly stated extension of redevelopment-of-existing-housing to include the redevelopment of existing areas,⁹⁵ on the grounds that only considering housing areas excluded housing opportunities achieved through the redevelopment of other types of area (e.g. retail, industrial), and was therefore unnecessarily restrictive. Consequently *TtP*'s category was considerably widened.

⁹² Here some notable exceptions were the Avon Study and the London 2000 Study.

⁹³ E.g. the London 2000 Study's (p.49) Live-Work Units, and the London 1994 Study's (p.26) and the Cambridge Study's (p.10) homes-in-multiple-occupation.

⁹⁴ E.g. London 1994 Study (p.26) allowed local borough policy towards homes-in-multiple-occupation to be considered and expressed in the *ucs*.

⁹⁵ It should be noted here that the Halton Study (p.92) appears to have used a similar regeneration category, although they did not express it as clearly as the Avon Study (p.3). Particularly in the case of the Halton Study it may be subsumed into one of the core development-opportunity categories- the development-of-previously-developed-land-and-buildings or the conversion-of-commercial-buildings.

This extension also indicates an acceptance of the premise that a variety of different urban areas (not just residential ones) needed regenerating, and an acceptance that proactive policy was necessary to ensure that such regeneration happened. Furthermore, this development-opportunity category extension is built on the acceptance of the premise of the privileging of housing over other uses, perhaps through the provision of mixed-use initiatives. Thus this extension represents thinking in accordance with the Opportunity Model.

Homes-in-Multiple-Occupation

Homes-in-multiple-occupation development-opportunity appears to be an extension of the *TtP* thinking of residential subdivision. In these instances, they represent a distinctive type of housing opportunity. These are unlike the usual subdivision of large houses, and they may also include some new purpose-built homes-in-multiple-occupation- perhaps particularly for student accommodation.⁹⁶ This type of housing can also be depicted as a subset of residential subdivision, in the same way that office conversion has been depicted as a subset of commercial-conversion rather than being its own category. If *ucs* are considering this development-opportunity in this way then it may be hidden, and more *ucs* may have considered it than was apparent.⁹⁷

Where homes-in-multiple-occupation development-opportunities were overtly identified,⁹⁸ they were situated near or within the discussion of residential conversion. Here the Cambridge Study highlighted the fact that some larger homes had been converted into student rooms, homes-in-multiple-occupation and bedsits, and that the conversion trend was in this direction rather than the reverse, with homes-in-multiple-occupation being converted into other uses. Where it could, this study counted the number of housing units (student bedsits) as the homes-in-multiple-occupation contribution to *uc*. This suggests an intensification of residential use, but a loss to the family housing stock.

The London 1994 Study (p.26) noted that homes-in-multiple-occupation, whilst not ideal, did provide low rent housing, particularly for single people who might otherwise be homeless, and that tighter standards could improve the quality of accommodation. It also made the point that the conversion of homes-in-multiple-occupation into flats whilst increasing the number of dwelling units usually resulted in a net loss of household spaces.

⁹⁶ Although the *ucs* did not reflect this.

⁹⁷ E.g. the South West and Yorkshire and Humber (Appendix 1) Studies' inclusion of some categories that could be identified as homes-in-multiple-occupation, although they are not identified as such.

⁹⁸ The Cambridge Study (p.10), the London 2000 Study (p.62) and London 1994 Study (p.26).

So far as the London 1994 Study was concerned, it included homes-in-multiple-occupation in the consideration of *uc*, because it was a development-opportunity category that was there and consequently needed representing, but the *ucs* did not suggest that policy should be changed; indeed it noted that half the boroughs had policy to retain this housing provision and to restrict its conversion.

There was no suggestion in any of the *ucs* that conversions to homes-in-multiple-occupation reflected under-use in these homes, but rather that where they occurred they were an expression of intensification. Nor was there any suggestion in these studies that they were a development option that should be pursued through proactive policy. Instead, it was thought by some (London 1994 Study) that tighter regulatory planning policy might possibly enhance the quality of these residencies. Consequently, their inclusion in the *ucs* was a reflection of their existence, rather than an exploration of changes in policy to increase the housing stock.

Open-Space as a Development-Opportunity Category

Finally, some *ucs* chose to explore open-space, despite early governmental indications (*PPG3:(Draft)*) that this was not advisable due to its perceived contribution to sustainability, urban quality, and quality of life. Consequently, unlike many other uses, open-space is prioritised in *TtP* above housing. Since *TtP* did not include open-space, none of the post-*TtP* *ucs* looked at it. Here Hart Study (p.14) overtly expressed its non-inclusion, and the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study (p.26) included it, but then dismissed it (perhaps inadvertently) as part of its North East Arup Study data stream.⁹⁹

A number of pre-*TtP* *ucs* did look at open-space as a development-opportunity category. The North East Arup Study (p.21) considered and rejected it, and Halton Study (p.94) indicated some consideration. Nevertheless some *ucs* did give it some credence as a development-opportunity, e.g. the Wolverhampton Study. This reflected on the existing open-space's quality and functionality,¹⁰⁰ and then explored where and how these open-spaces could be enhanced in their existing use, through sensitively applied housing schemes; for example, by building housing on the edge of an open space prone to vandalism to increase its surveillance, and consequently increasing its sense of security. To

⁹⁹ The North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study (p.26-30) extrapolates its findings from the North East Arup Study, consequently because the North East Arup Study (p.21-22) does look at open-space but then goes on to reject it, so does the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study by default.

¹⁰⁰ Determined through its usage.

all intents and purposes, then, this study demonstrates that the development of housing in some instances may actually enhance the functionality of the open-space, improving its quality and the quality-of-life opportunities afforded to the local community, and it effectively argues for its inclusion as a source on the same grounds that most use to discount it. This suggests a proactive way of looking at this particular development-opportunity in keeping with the Opportunity Model, where the creation of additional housing is a by-product of other policy initiatives- the enhancement of urban green-space, rather than as the central concern of the policy being pressed.

To Sum Up: This demonstrates that the additional development-opportunity categories are in many instances real extensions rather than simply different subdivisions of the same development-opportunities, Their inclusion pushes the boundary of what would commonly be seen as desirable as a means of creating additional urban housing- building on urban open space, turning family housing into bedsits and regenerating other uses areas through housing, losing the other uses. Consequently, they do express a willingness to explore and extend development-opportunity options for housing (i.e. suggesting thinking according to the Opportunity Model), but at the expense of other functions necessary to create a lively and varied urban centre.

8.3.8 The Definition of UC through the Development-Opportunities¹⁰¹

The inclusion of development-opportunity categories within the earlier *ucs* demonstrates a surprising degree of innovation, which has diminished over time as the *ucs* increasingly conformed to the *TtP* development-opportunity categories; although some were still trying to extend the bounds of *uc* (e.g. Avon Study p.12). However, in most instances this extension is often less expansive than it first appears, reflecting more descriptively on what is already occurring rather than proactively altering policy to encourage change.

In other instances, *TtP*'s categories have been adopted more reluctantly, notably the redevelopment-of car-parks development-opportunity category. This suggests a disjunction between the government concept of an assessed *uc* and most authorities' concept, with the authorities' one being more constraining. That said, if the diagram were redrawn using post-2000 *ucs*, it would relate much more nearly to the diagram representing *TtP* in chapter 5 (*Figure 5.6*), suggesting considerable agreement over what is included, although how these development-opportunity categories are then treated may be quite different.

¹⁰¹ These findings are likely to be influenced by the survey choices made early in the research, which may have over-emphasised the more innovative early *ucs* and under-represented the later ones.

With respect to the alignment of the *ucs*' development-opportunities and the concept-models, almost all of the *ucs* development-opportunity categories are underpinned by premises which align them with the Opportunity Model. Yet their characterisation and treatment within the *ucs*, often articulated through the method-types (see chapter 7) is frequently constraining, revealing more traditional thinking patterns, more closely aligned to the Constrained Model than the development-opportunity categories' inclusion initially indicates.

Finally, then, the development-opportunity categories included in an *ucs* appear more fixed in 2002, and perhaps more established, than they were in 1994, and they conform more nearly to the government's advice, but the approach seems to be less innovative.

8.4 This Research's Analysis of the Constraints

Different *ucs* have different remits; some are advisory, other are *uc* assessments; some are partial, others are complete; some are regional, others are local, and many have different purposes.¹⁰² These remits may be more influential on the depth of the *ucs* than on other parts of it.¹⁰³ Advisory *ucs* may reflect on the constraints and policy options more fully¹⁰⁴ but do not try to apply them;¹⁰⁵ partial *ucs* may consider particular development-opportunity categories more deeply,¹⁰⁶ but not necessarily so;¹⁰⁷ the differing purposes for the *ucs* may direct where the *ucs* reflects most deeply.¹⁰⁸ The initial assumption of this research was that the deeper *ucs* were more likely to reflect on the constraints in ways that pertained to the Opportunity Model, and the shallower *ucs* were more likely to reflect the Constrained Model.

As indicated in chapter 5, the constraint categories identified here have been adopted from *TtP* and adapted to fit this research's purposes.

8.4.1 The Characterisation of Different Constraints

The level of consideration given to the different constraint categories varies within the *ucs* and across *ucs*, and this difference of consideration is largely a function of the

¹⁰² This is discussed more fully in section 5.2.2.

¹⁰³ Although the remit is an influence elsewhere in an *ucs* too.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. North West Study Manual (p.86-102) and East Midland Study Manual (particularly Part 3).

¹⁰⁵ This is left to those for whom the study manual was written.

¹⁰⁶ E.g. London SRQ Study.

¹⁰⁷ South Tyneside's Brownfield Study.

¹⁰⁸ Halton Study linked the *ucs* to remediation, housing and employment, and the Wolverhampton Study to a set of sustainable principles.

consideration and treatment of the constraints imposed upon the development-opportunities, which is partially reflected in the depth of analysis these *ucs* carried out.

The constraints that can be found in the *ucs* have been tabulated in *Figure 8.7* using *TtP*s constraint categories, with the additions of environmental considerations, and social acceptability. These last two constraints were raised in some *ucs* that did not clearly appear in *TtP*'s list. The *ucs* information has been tabulated in date order (as elsewhere, e.g. *Figure 7.17* and *Figure 8.2*).

8.4.2 The Fit of the Constraints

The fit of the *ucs* constraints to this research's constraint categories varied, for similar reasons to those for the development-opportunities (see section 8.3.1). Another reason for their variation was their linkage to the development-opportunities. Furthermore the constraints' variation in fit depended on the way they were identified and treated. Where the constraints were hidden in trends they were not obvious to the research, but may nevertheless have been included, e.g. the Stoke Study. Additionally their variation in fit was that *ucs* treated different constraints differently, focusing on one and skimming others.

Again, the *ucs* using very different approaches from *TtP* fitted the constraints categories poorly. So the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study was a poor fit.¹⁰⁹ Other *ucs* - the Avon Study and the London 2000 Study - gave summative reports raising constraints worthy of comment, but these *ucs* may also have considered other unstated constraints.

Figure 8.7 shows that, just like the development-opportunities, so the constraints of the post-*TtP* *ucs* fit the constraints categories depicted by *TtP* better than the pre-*TtP* ones; and as elsewhere, this research believes that this is because the list was available and defined, so the later *ucs* could consider whether to take it up or not, whilst the earlier *ucs* were reflecting on what the issues might be, and how these could be represented.

¹⁰⁹ As already mentioned this *ucs* looked at different data-streams, some of which contained constraints e.g. the North East Arup Study, and the North East Brownfield Study (also completed by Nathaniel Lichfield). However, the North East Nathaniel Lichfield Study did consider the market and policy support for brownfield housing using 3 market scenarios: strengthened market and policy support, assume no change, and market downturn (p.50-52).

Figure 8.7 Table showing the constraint considerations considered in the different ucs (horizontal demarcation line denotes publication of TtP) (colour diagram)

Study	Date	Developability			Market Viability			Planning Standards			Local Character		Non-TtP constraints	
		Topography: physical constraints	Infrastructure constraints	Legal constraints: ownership	Market conditions	Local market characteristics	Development Value	Standard	Designations	Policy	Conservation	Bad Neighbours	Environmental Considerations	Social Acceptability
Wychavon Study	06/02	Par 8.3	Sch		Par 8.6		Par 8.6		Par 8.5				SSSIs	
Hart Study	02/02	p.25		p.22	p.25	p.25			p.23			p.24		
South Hams Study	11/01	p.4	p.4	p.4	Market viability p.4			p.4	p.4		p.4			
Avon Study	08/01	p.18	p.9	p.18	p.10	p.10				p.9			p.9	
North East Lichfield Study	04/01	Within data sets			p.43					p.43				
Stoke Study (P?)	?/ 01					p.7			p.7	p.7				
London 2000 Study	09/00	p.87	p.87	p.87	HBF NHF consulted p.17					p.87	p.93			
Sheffield Study	05/00	p.19	p.19	p.19	p.19	p.19			p.19					
South West Study	01/99	p.17	p.17	p.17	p.18, A3:scenarios			p.31	p.32	p.33				
Wolverhampton Study	?/98			LOTS	Market viability								St 6	St 5
Cambridge Study	12/98		p.5-7	LOTS		p.15				p.15	p.15			
EM Study Manual	11/98	Sec 6.5	p.77	Sec 62		p.58	Sec 6.2		Sec 6.6	Sec 6.7	C p.18	C p.18	C p.18	C p.11
ST Brownfield Study (P)	?/98												par 1.4	
Yorkshire & Humber Study	07/98	p.21				p.20-1		p. 31		p.25				
London SRQ Study (P)	?/98	p.59	p.59	p.35	p.59			p.53		p.53				
North East Arup Study	1/98					p.5					Viewed poorly			
North West Study Manual	1998	Implementability p.79 (cost p.90)			p.79	p.90		p.82	p.27	p.82	Local env/ amenity p.89		p.24?	
Halton Study	07/97	Ap D2	Ap D2	Ap D2	Sec 4	Sec 4	D2 viii	SC2/3		Ap D2	D2 i		D2 ii	
Leicester(shire) Study	08/96	p.2	p.5	p.4			Ap. 2.		p.5	p.8			p.5	p.2
West Sussex Study (P)	06/96	Ap E	Ap E		N p.13			Ap.E	Ap. E				p.9-10	
Hertfordshire Study	10/95	Financial Viability Ap.3				Ap.3	Ap. 3	Ap.8	Ap.8	Ap.8				Ap 4
London 1994 Study	?/94	p.56	p.56	p.56						p.56				

KEY

P: Partial Study

Leicester(shire) Study: Leicestershire/Leicester Study ST Brownfield Study: South Tyneside Brownfield Study

EM Study Manual: East Midlands Study Manual

Red indicates that the constraints are perceived to be unchangeable; Grey indicates that the constraints are perceived to be changeable

The space given to the constraints considered in the *ucs* has been reduced in the post-*TtP* *ucs*, and the constraints accord more nearly with *TtP*'s constraint categories, often accepting its simplified definitions and how they should be considered, including the new emphasis of discounting on the grounds of the constraints without necessarily elaborating on them. This suggests considerable accordance with both the government's and the *ucs*' practices in defining and considering the constraints, post-*TtP*. An exception in the fit of the post-*TtP* *ucs* constraints considerations is the Avon Study's (p.9) environmental consideration.

The space given to the constraints pre-*TtP* was much greater, and they were more frequently presented as being much more complex than in the later *ucs*. Moreover, more constraints were likely to be considered, notably environmental considerations, and social acceptability, but also amongst the sub-categories bad-neighbour uses were thought to be significant. Therefore, as with the development-opportunities, the fit is poorer among the earlier *ucs* than the later ones.

However, as will become apparent in the analysis of the way the constraints were treated, the post-*TtP* *ucs* were more likely to present the constraints as unchallenged and unchangeable, by simply discounting development-opportunities on their account. This too accords more nearly to *TtP* but appears to run counter to other aspects of *TtP*'s conceptualisation of *ucs*, by not considering whether some of these constraints are overcomeable, and whether overcoming them might not be desirable. This limits the *ucs* ability to be exploratory- suggesting the Constrained Model of *uc*. In contrast, the earlier *ucs* were more likely to consider how the constraints could be overcome primarily through policy changes- closer to the Opportunity Model. Therefore, perhaps slightly surprisingly, the *ucs* more closely aligned to the *TtP* categories are more closely aligned to this research's Constrained Model of *uc*.

8.4.3 The Treatment of the Constraints in the UCS

The Treatment of 'Developability'

Under the term 'developability' *TtP* noted that some sites could not be developed due to:

- the [un]willingness of owners to release the opportunity for development
- the infrastructure capacity, including the provision of satisfactory access, and
- the physical constraints on development, including site contamination or the risk of flooding

TtP (2000), p.30

TtP was not forthcoming about the level of detail authorities should go to in considering these concerns.¹¹⁰ The *ucs* themselves reflected on these constraints to varying depths, and with differing emphases.

All the *ucs* reflected on at least one or other sub-category of the developability constraint. However, some *ucs* did not consider all the development-constraint sub-categories-missing one or more out.

Where no mention was made of a developability category,¹¹¹ it suggests that either the *ucs* considered it in an unidentifiable way (incorporated into a trend for example)¹¹² or that the constraint was a non-issue and did not need to be considered (no *ucs* appears to take this position). Where the former appears to be true, i.e. the unidentified constraint is present, then this suggests that it had to be accepted as a given and unalterable, because it was present but unrecognised. This appears to fit with *TtP*'s emphasis on minimising the attention given to the constraints, but prevents the *ucs* from exploring ways of testing and challenging these constraints.

Amongst the physical developability constraints, a key issue, as *TtP* itself indicated (p.30), was the perceived undesirability of overcoming certain constraints, notably flood-risk, unstable land, and perhaps high contamination. These constraints were usually presented as high-risk or unsafe, and consequently presented as insurmountable, with an inherent emphasis on the irresponsibility of developing them. In these instances the *ucs* treated these constraints as givens, did not explore the possibilities of overcoming them, and discounted the sites (see South Hams Study p.5) or a proportion of the development-opportunity category (Avon Study p.32) to reflect the development-opportunities' undevelopability, and this was inevitably constraining.

Other undevelopable constraints emphasised the inability of development due to cost; for example, the Cambridge Study described the inability of the infrastructure to accommodate additional housing, after discussing this with the various providers. This *ucs* also accepted these particular constraints as given and unalterable, again suggesting a Constrained Model of *uc*.

¹¹⁰ Although they did provide more advice for other constraints e.g. market viability (see below).

¹¹¹ E.g. West Sussex Study did not mention legal-and-ownership-constraints sub-category.

¹¹² This looks to be the case in the Stoke Study.

Both the Leicestershire/Leicester Study¹¹³ and the Halton Study¹¹⁴ demonstrated that even physical constraints such as contamination, so often accepted as a given, could be considered in terms of the cost of remediation. Therefore, even 'risky' physical constraints do not have to be accepted as givens, but can be explored. In the event, in both *ucs* they ultimately demonstrated that the cost was prohibitive and ultimately constraining.

The non-topographical developable constraints were more often presented as overcomeable, and in some instances this was seen as desirable, and a matter for policy. One such constraint was owners' willingness to develop. Some *ucs* gave attention to this, and consider ways of overcoming owner inertia.¹¹⁵ However, not all *ucs* presented ownership issues as overcomeable; some considered the ownership constraint more shallowly, identifying it as a constraint but not attempting to alter its impact.¹¹⁶ This suggests a range in the depth of these two *ucs* reflections on this particular constraint, and suggests that the deeper consideration was also more exploratory than the identification of the other, and more likely to arrive at solutions to overcome the constraint- reflecting the Opportunity Model.

Therefore, different *ucs* treated the developability constraints category and its sub-categories quite differently. The defining feature as to whether they are characterised as developable or not seems primarily dependent on whether the development of the site affected was seen as risky or not, and here the Halton Study showed that this is not always entirely down to the actual constraint but also relates to the perception of the constraint, and the willingness of the *ucs* to countenance the cost of change. That said, even where change is countenanced, it is often found to be too costly, but it has been explored.

The Treatment of 'Market Viability'

TtP used the term 'market viability' (p.31) to consider market conditions, and exemplified *ucs* which considered these conditions in a graduated way (using scenarios) to reflect the attractiveness of different sites in different market conditions. *TtP* also noted (p.31) the

¹¹³ Here the Leicestershire/Leicester Study completed development appraisals on sites to evaluate the cost of development and its feasibility.

¹¹⁴ One of the purposes of the Halton Study was to reflect on the remediation possibility of sites, and the potential for allowing housing and employment uses once these sites had been treated.

¹¹⁵ E.g. the Hertfordshire Study discussed with owners what would encourage them to develop, viewing such development as being beneficial to the local areas.

¹¹⁶ E.g. the London 1994 Study (p.56) noted the 'nature and severity of the problem' but did not consider ways to overcome it.

local and national dimension of the market and its sectoral characteristics.¹¹⁷ Thus market viability is a very complex issue.

TtP noted that changes in national and local planning policies:

[were] likely to reconfigure the market

TtP (2000), p.31

so that historic performance was inadequate as a gauge of future performance, particularly as *PPG3:2000* prescribed higher density housing, which altered the profitability of housing schemes, and housing permission on some sites would therefore become more likely.

This indicates an acceptance by *TtP* that altering the regulatory regime alters the operation of the market favourably for housing, and suggests that local authorities should also adopt proactive policy intervention to encourage urban housing options. This suggests a *TtP* position favouring this research's Opportunity Model, with an additional emphasis on the achievability of this model through proactive planning.

Oxley and Golland (2002)¹¹⁸ also emphasised the importance of the market, through their research on an economic model to assess the economic factors within *ucs*, indicating that the methods for this part of an *ucs* inadequately reflected the complexities of the market.

Almost all of the *ucs* considered the market,¹¹⁹ although how they considered it and characterised it varied quite considerably. In accordance with *TtP*, some *ucs*¹²⁰ depicted the market as alterable, offering different policy positions to encourage development. Moreover, they depicted this alterability of the market as desirable, reflected in their countenancing different policy positions (an Opportunity Model understanding of *uc*).

Where policy was thought to alter the market and this was perceived positively, the connectivity of the market and policy was recognised, usually through matrixing,¹²¹ but the respective influence and interaction between policy and market performance was less clearly understood, and not easily explored.¹²² Here the North West Study Manual (p.87)

¹¹⁷ I.e. the fact that there is a housing market, retail market etc, and that even within markets there are sub-markets, due to types of unit and location, and that these work separately from each other but also inter-relate.

¹¹⁸ Oxley and Golland research – ESRC research award R000223799.

¹¹⁹ Here South Tyneside Brownfield Study and the London 1994 Study did not do so.

¹²⁰ E.g. the North West Study, the Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.25 and Appendix 7).

¹²¹ Either Level-of-Difficulty method-type or Scoring -Matrices method-type.

¹²² The South West Study considered the policies and market scenarios on the same matrix with respect to differing sites, but each was still considered to be an independent variable not influencing the other, but instead only influencing the site; and the market was described rather than thought to be something that could be changed (see Appendix 4).

recognised the market's demand and supply sides as significant, but was still limited in explaining how policy interactions would alter these, and to what effect.

Other *ucs* reflected on the complexity of the market. Some drew out the sectoral characteristic of the market,¹²³ whilst others drew out the local variations in contrast to the national market,¹²⁴ the local characteristics in terms of the housing stock and what was socially acceptable/desirable,¹²⁵ and the very localised geographical variation.¹²⁶

Here a comparison between the Sheffield Study and the Yorkshire and Humber Study is informative. In the Sheffield Study the localised market was descriptively characterised as 'weak', 'medium' or 'strong' but then this market performance was accepted as a given, and its alterability was not explored. Therefore, although considered, the market's changeability and variance is accepted, but the interaction of policy on that changeability remains unexplored. In contrast, in the Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.20) the market's changeability was placed in the context of changing policy, and the *ucs* anticipated that policy would alter it, and perhaps should. Therefore although some *ucs* may understand the market to be changing, they may not see it as possible to influence, or do not see altering it as a planning function. This suggests a much more constrained view of *uc*.

Finally, some *ucs* accepted the market conditions almost as a default position, e.g. the Stoke Study (p.7) and to a lesser extent the Cambridge Study.¹²⁷ In some of these *ucs* the market may not even have been identified as a separate constraint but accepted instead as part of their trend calculation.

Here a number of positions are reflected, all constraining. The first presents the market as being adequately treated as an unidentified constraint category in a trend calculation. As shown above this is refuted by *TtP*. The second presents the market as lying beyond the remit of planning regulation, and consequently beyond the remit of the *ucs*; this too is refuted by *TtP* (see above). Alternatively, the market may be presented as being too complex, too unpredictable and being inadequately explored in an *ucs*, and consequently

¹²³ E.g. the North East Arup Study, the Halton Study (with regard to housing and employment land markets, p.36-59).

¹²⁴ E.g. Halton Study (section 4, p.36-42), and the East Midland Study Manual (p.16).

¹²⁵ E.g. both the North East Arup Study (p.5) and the East Midlands Study Manual (p.56) noted the relative undesirability of flats due to the local preponderance of cheap Victorian terrace housing.

¹²⁶ E.g. the Halton Study (p.41), the Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.20-21 and Appendix 7), the South West Study (Appendix 4). The Yorkshire and Humber Study (p.21) used housebuilders' information to identify different areas' desirability from the perspective of would-be house-buyers.

¹²⁷ The Cambridge Study (p.11) considers some market conditions of certain development-opportunities with a little more (although not much more) reflection than other *ucs* that use Trends method-types.

better ignored. This position is effectively refuted by other *ucs* and by *TtP*'s inclusion of it as a constraint to be considered.

Therefore most *ucs* recognise the importance and complexity of the market on different development-opportunities, and many reflect on it quite deeply. Nevertheless, many of these *ucs* depictions of *uc* ultimately accept it as a given, without considering the impact of altering policy. Here a clear distinction can be made between those *ucs* which do go on to explore how policy might influence the market (the Opportunity Model) and those that do not (the Constrained Model). Yet even here, the interaction between policy and market factors is poorly expressed, with both being treated as separate variables affecting development-opportunities independently, rather than influencing each other and the development-opportunities.¹²⁸

The Treatment of 'Planning Policy'

TtP's (p.32) inclusion of planning standards in the Constraints-Consideration rather than in the Yield-Assessment stage could be construed to mean that *TtP* saw planning policy as constraining. This impression is further endorsed by *TtP*'s emphasis on 'standards', not policy, drawing out planning's regulatory role, also thought to be constraining. However, *TtP* makes the point that:

'it is important to ensure that discounting is not driven by out of date planning approaches that place undue reliance on inflexible standards'

TtP (2000), p.32

This indicates that *TtP* saw the planning standards as being open to challenge, rather than to be rigidly adhered to, and this is further endorsed through its method preferences which highlight the ability to alter policy.

Therefore planning policy can either be characterised as a regulatory tool, emphasising its constraining nature and its inflexibility, or as a proactive process emphasising a more dynamic approach to planning standards and policy, and the need for greater exploration due to changes to national guidance, and new urban contexts.

The first position is reflected where the *uc* has been used to support existing policy, itself characterised as established and legitimised through planning processes. Here the *ucs* is often presented as the support document for these policies, applying it and arguing its

¹²⁸ Perhaps here Oxley and Golland will offer some help.

applications as policy parameters.¹²⁹ In such instances, exploring policy goes beyond the *raison d'être* of the study; the purpose of the *ucs* is to accept policy as given, and the policies are often presented that way; for example the Cambridge Study assumed that some policies would continue unchallenged (notably the greenbelt, p.1) and that no use of compulsory purchase orders would be pursued (p.1). It goes on to look at planning refusals, and whether these decisions were upheld at inquiry, to reflect on whether those policies most challenged could be altered (p.9). It suggests that the relatively high rejection rate of these appeals (79%) indicated that these policies should continue to be pursued. The South Tyneside Brownfield Study also did not investigate the policies; it simply outlined the relevant policies for each identified development-opportunity and assumed that these would be upheld. In both instances, such a position effectively presents policy as legitimately constraining.

In contrast, other *ucs* presented policy as dynamic and focused on its changeability, noting its influence on the other constraint categories. This equates more closely to the Opportunity Model, and relates more nearly to *TtP*'s emphasis (*TtP* p.32). In these *ucs*, the study purpose itself changed, with the *ucs* becoming an exploratory tool rather than a regulatory tool; the support the *ucs* offered to policy was derived less from its acceptance and more through a demonstration of its having been robustly challenged, and explored.

These *ucs*, then, represent a shift in mode from a regulatory reactive mode to a proactive interventionist mode of planning. This is reflected in some *ucs* reflecting on the impact of regenerative policy¹³⁰ changes in funding arrangements, compulsory purchase orders etc.,¹³¹ and the changes in planning role.¹³²

Interestingly, it would appear that by placing *uc* more firmly into the planning-for-housing activity, with its emphasis on land-use planning policy-making rather than more proactive regenerative planning modes, *TtP* perhaps began to undo, through the planning function, the very thing it hoped to achieve in its advocacy for more proactive policy making. This is explored more fully in this research's case study (see chapter 9). However, it is evident

¹²⁹ E.g. West Sussex Study (p.7-9), Stoke Study (p.4-5).

¹³⁰ North West Study Manual (Scenario 3 p.5-6), Hertfordshire Study, East Midlands Study Manual (particularly Part 2).

¹³¹ East Midlands Study Manual (Part 2) reflected on the range of different initiatives that might be usable in the region's localities.

¹³² East Midlands Study Manual (p.31-34) reflected on different remits of the various stakeholders and how planners could collaborate with them, and the South West Study (p.32-33) considered a facilitating role for planners.

in the way *ucs* discounted sites without apparently reflecting on the influence that altering policy would have (e.g. the Stoke Study).

The Treatment of ‘Local Character’

TtP raised the issue of local character, and challenged some *ucs*’ practice of discounting designated conservation areas due to their designation, suggesting that with sensitive design such areas could:

often sustain further development without any effect on their character

TtP (2000), p.31

instead it indicated that areas should be reviewed. Consequently, it did not view these areas as sacrosanct, or development as inevitably detrimental, highlighting the development-opportunities over the constraints.

Nevertheless, this does highlight the tendency of some *ucs* to discount areas on the basis of conservation area status before examining their development- opportunities, e.g. South Hams Study (p.4), and again the constraint is treated as a given and unalterable.

TtP did not draw attention to the *ucs* practice of dismissing development-opportunities due to ‘bad-neighbourliness’, although this too presents the local character as constraining development, albeit for the opposite reasons. In most instances this constraint is accepted as unchangeable and the development opportunity is dismissed. For example the South Tyneside Brownfield Study noted where industrial uses in close proximity to possible development-sites would have a negative impact on the living conditions of the area, and then dismissed the development of these opportunities for residential use on these grounds.

Nevertheless, although local character was usually presented rather cursorily as an unalterable constraint, *TtP* indicated (p.31) that there were other ways of characterising it. Here the Hertfordshire Study (p.11-19) and the London SRQ Study (p.1-2) both suggested that, by considering a local area’s character, focusing on design and emphasising the need to retain the locality’s quality allowed previously-overlooked development-opportunities to be generated. East Midlands Study Manual (Annex C p.6) also allowed for both bad-neighbour uses and conservation designations in their survey of the local character area, and provided space (Annex C p.16) to suggest whether the constraints were overcomeable or not.

Therefore, once again, where the constraint has been presented as unalterable it reflects a Constrained Model of *uc*, and where it has been seen as changeable it reflects a perception of *uc* closer to the Opportunity Model.

The Treatment of Environmental Considerations

TtP did not mention environmental considerations as a particular constraint,¹³³ and the omission of these considerations suggests that the government does not recognise the connection between *uc* and environmental considerations, effectively divorcing environmental considerations and their impact on the development-opportunities from the definition of *uc*.

Interestingly, this omission of environmental considerations from *TtP*'s constraint categories severs the link between the idea of *uc* and one of its founding reasons for conceptualisation -environmental capacity- and its need for assessment and assessment studies. A notable example of the earlier approach were the Chester Study¹³⁴ and the West Sussex Study,¹³⁵ both cited in *Housing and Urban Capacity*, itself linked strongly to sustainability. In these reports, environmental considerations were an integral part of these *ucs*' deliberation of *uc* as an idea, and could not be separated out from it.

Where environmental considerations, such as environmental capacity, have been considered in the *ucs*, they have illuminated the ambiguity of sustainability as an idea related to *uc*, with some arguments suggesting that the maximisation of the development of the urban area should be pursued: altering travel patterns, reducing land take, increasing the reuse of previously used land and buildings etc., but other arguments appearing against it: development diminishing the quality of the urban environment itself, challenging claims that particular sites were available for development, challenging the claim that housing would rejuvenate these localities and claiming that some facilities were in danger of overuse.¹³⁶

The fact that environmental capacity was such an intrinsic part of *uc*, and the reason behind many of the early *ucs*, demonstrates the distance *TtP* has travelled away from the Constrained Model of *uc* discovered by this research towards the Opportunity Model. The fact that environmental considerations were, at best, downplayed and, at worst, neglected by *TtP*, and by some *ucs* on its advice, demonstrates the extreme shift in conceptualisation that has taken place in the understanding of *uc*.

¹³³ Although arguably it incorporates the considerations of environmental quality and sustainable development in its preferred Yield-Assessment method-types (see chapter 7).

¹³⁴ Not included in this study but identified in *Housing and Urban Capacity* p.L-D 4.

¹³⁵ See West Sussex Study (Appendix A).

¹³⁶ Perhaps touched on under *TtP*'s (p.30) infrastructure considerations.

This disregard of environmental considerations by *TtP* appears to be borne out in many of the studies, with some giving little to no consideration of it,¹³⁷ effectively accepting through silence that environmental considerations are not related to the concept of *uc*, and have no place in the pages of an *ucs*.

Nevertheless, some studies did reflect on environmental-constraints in one way or another.¹³⁸ Therefore, in many *ucs* environmental-constraints were important and integral to their understanding of *uc* as an idea, argued primarily on sustainability grounds, the quality of the environment, the need to preserve scarce resources, and the questionable ability of particular locations to accommodate more. So in most instances where environmental-constraints are raised, they are linked to the need to constrain development, due to the negative impact this will have on valued resources in that particular locality.

From this it can be seen that although *TtP* might have disconnected environmental capacity from *uc*, not all *ucs* accepted this disconnection. Moreover, where environmental constraints were considered, they were usually presented as constraining, with an emphasis on protecting existing features, both natural and man-made,¹³⁹ supported by a sustainability argument for the need to preserve certain resources for this and future generations. This constraint is perhaps one of the most constraining, and reflects many of the arguments to be found in this research's Constrained Model.

The Treatment of Social Acceptability

The social-acceptability constraint-category in the *ucs* reflected firstly on whether the community perceived development as a threat or as an opportunity; and secondly on the acceptability of the proposed built form.

TtP's (p.25) design advice at the Yield-Assessment stage¹⁴⁰ suggested quite different urban forms to those that planners had traditionally argued for: the densities were higher, the parking standards were lower, the units were flats rather than the perceived preferred option of houses, the locality was central with an emphasis on walking. The London SRQ

¹³⁷ Sheffield Study.

¹³⁸ The Leicestershire/Leicester Study considered the environmental impact of different modes of transport. The Wolverhampton Study created some sustainability principles to test the viability of different development-opportunities in different urban-areas. The Wychavon Study created a sustainability matrix to discount development-opportunities which were considered not to be sustainably located. The West Sussex Study gave considerable space (when compared to its overall size) to environmental capacity, considering the impact of additional housing on both man-made and natural environments and resources (see West Sussex Study Appendix A).

¹³⁹ E.g. West Sussex Study (Appendix A).

¹⁴⁰ Derived from *ucs* like London SRQ Study, North West Study Manual, Hertfordshire Study.

Study (see p.64-65 and Annex 1) even suggested the possibility of shared car fleets. Such changes reflect quite a cultural shift for society, and for planners to countenance these changes also suggests a major shift in planning thought over the social acceptability of some of these options- a shift that government advocated (see chapter 4).

TtP reflected on this through its Yield-Assessment method-type considerations, noting that one of the design-led method-type advantages was that it:

... allow[ed] densities to be increased showing how these can be accommodated while producing attractive homes in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

TtP (2000), p.26

This rather oblique reference to social acceptability, through a consideration of the 'attractiveness of homes', implies an acceptance by *TtP* that this constraint had to be overcome, but that this social acceptability was assumed to be easily achieved- perhaps through simply showing some designs, with demonstrably higher densities in attractive surroundings, to the interested parties. Consequently, social acceptability is not considered by *TtP* to be strong enough to stand as a constraining influence on development in its own right. This position is also observed through *TtP* not including it as a constraint category. Consequently, as a reflection of *TtP*'s silence on the matter, *TtP* anticipated the social acceptability of more intense development, on sites designated for other uses, as a given, although in fact it is not proven.

This treatment, or perhaps non-treatment, of the social-acceptability constraint-category by *TtP* also demonstrates that *TtP* does not recognise the link between the social acceptability of development and the construction of the *uc* concept, preferring to reflect on *uc* in terms other than in those that reflect social preferences, and portraying the social acceptability of the proposed development opportunities as something divorced from *uc*.

TtP's non-consideration of social acceptability as a constraint-category has had repercussions on the *ucs* usage of it. Many of the post-*TtP* *ucs* did not include social acceptability as a constraint at all, effecting the divorce between the *uc* concept and the social acceptability of development outlined in the paragraph above. In these *ucs* the social acceptability of the proposed developments is a non-issue, and its non-consideration facilitates the notion that the new urban forms being touted within the *ucs* are indeed acceptable. Such a position reflects the Opportunity Model.

In contrast, some *ucs* did consider the social acceptability of development. The Hertfordshire Study (p.8) consulted with landowner focus groups living in the locality they

were considering, to find out how they perceived these new ways of developing, and to reflect on what could be done to encourage them to assist in achieving these new forms through developing their land. The East Midlands Study Manual too suggested that a questionnaire might be used to find out the local communities' perceptions of the area, its developability and the desirability of such development to occur.

In both instances, rather than focusing on the constraining influence the social-acceptability constraint-category had on development, they took a more proactive approach, arguing the case for such developments, and working on ways of making such schemes acceptable. Therefore, where social-acceptability was presented as a possible constraint, it was not articulated as such, but was reflected upon through the consideration of related proactive policy to overcome its constraining nature, rather than accepting this as inevitable and given. Therefore the social-acceptability constraint-category can be cast in the light of opportunity in keeping with this research's Opportunity Model.

Arguably the market can be considered as a proxy for social acceptability, although this was not advocated by *TtP*. In the instances where this occurs in the *ucs*, the value of the dwelling units are related to their desirability, which indicates their social acceptability. This was reflected upon within the *ucs*, either through determining housebuilders' opinions on the viability of particular types of housing (e.g. Hertfordshire Study p.73-74), or through the consideration of the different residential markets where they considered that certain types of housing would be more popular than others (e.g. North East Arup Study).¹⁴¹

However, market viability is probably more properly considered to be a consideration of the market and its impact on the development-opportunities, rather than a proxy for social acceptability, particularly as it does not take into account externalities and neighbourhood effects such as the impact of converting family housing into student accommodation, reflecting on such a conversion in relation to the financial return for the individual rather than in terms of the development's acceptability to other residents or the quality of the area.

¹⁴¹ The North East Arup Study (p.5) commented that flats were not viable because of the abundance of terraced housing in the area, which was seen to be the preferred housing choice.

8.4.4 The Definition of UC Through the Constraints

The definition of *uc* through the constraints suggests that as time has progressed so the social acceptability of altering some policies has been taken as a given, and environmental considerations have become increasingly unimportant, reflecting the government's severance of *uc* from its parent concept, environmental capacity (see chapter 2).

As with the development-opportunities, the constraints included in the earlier *ucs* were more deeply considered, linked to a greater level of complexity and considered more proactively; ways of overcoming the constraints were often sought, rather than accepting them. Such attention, where it occurs, and it occurs unevenly, suggests an Opportunity Model understanding of *uc*.

Surprisingly, given that most of *TtP*'s advice sought to maximise development-opportunities, the later *ucs* adhering more closely to this advice consider the constraints more shallowly, often identifying them and then discounting development-opportunities in the light of their perceived impact, without obviously considering whether these constraints can be overcome or not. The unintended consequence is that the treatment of the constraints adheres more closely to this research's Constrained Model of *uc*.

8.5 The Meaning of UCS Assessment-Content in the Context of Time and Government Advice

There is considerable variation across the *ucs*' content in terms of both development-opportunities and constraints. This is true particularly in the earlier *ucs* (pre-*TtP*), which have also served a wider set of purposes,¹⁴² than in the later *ucs*. This enabled many of these earlier *ucs* to be more exploratory, both in what they looked at and how they characterised it. This was expressed in the variation of the linkages that these different *ucs* made between the categories, evident by the paucity of fit of many of these pre-*TtP* *ucs*' development-opportunities, and constraints against this research's categories developed from *TtP*'s categories.

Yet, although more varied, these earlier *ucs* also were more limited in their choice of categories, missing many of the development-opportunities *TtP* highlighted, and limiting themselves to just a few.

¹⁴² Reflecting on population statistics in relation to housing demand (Halton Study p.38-p.42), environmental capacity (West Sussex Study Annex 1), proactive planning initiatives (East Midlands Study Manual chapter 4 and p.60-68).

In contrast, the post-*TtP ucs* have shown much less variety in their content choices, sticking more rigidly to *TtP*'s categories, and the linkages *TtP* made between these categories. Here, however, there are some notable exceptions, e.g. the Avon Study. Although wider in their initial choices of development-opportunity than the pre-*TtP ucs*, the post-*TtP ucs* have also been less exploratory in their approach, have done less to understand or explore the development-opportunities they have reviewed, and have tended to use the constraints to discount development-opportunities with relatively little reflection and considered a narrower range of constraints.

Therefore *uc* is becoming more clearly defined through what is included in its assessment of development-opportunities, and incidentally in how this is subsequently treated. This definition through inclusion accords more nearly to *TtP*'s definition through inclusion presented in *Figure 5.6*, and it is wider than most pre-*TtP ucs*' implicit definitions through their inclusions of development opportunities. This widening out of interest suggests an Opportunity Model of *uc*.

Yet, this said, the *ucs*' content in post-*TtP ucs* has also been treated more cursorily, with less attention given to understanding its characteristics or exploring its possibilities more fully, often discounting many of the development-opportunities with seemingly little regard. This contrasts with the earlier *ucs*, many of which were more reflective and more exploratory, and demonstrated a better understanding of the development-opportunities, the constraints preventing their development, and how these might be overcome. This suggests that in their treatment of contents of *uc*, the earlier *ucs* were less constrained than most post-*TtP ucs*.

Therefore, although the government's position on content appears to accord with the Opportunity Model, and although the post-*TtP ucs* appear to include most of the government's categories, incidentally demonstrating its influence, the way these have been used to explore the contents has ultimately often been constraining. This is explored in the context of the other research findings in chapter 10.

Chapter 9 The Case Study:

South Tyneside MBC

Chapter 9 The Case Study: South Tyneside MBC

9.1 Introduction

This chapter forms this research's third analytical window (see chapter 3) to view how the local level is perceiving and using the concept of *uc*. Here, again the focus is on the conceptual meaning of *uc* and its assessment, explored through the way South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council (STMBC) have argued their position and understanding of *uc* as it pertains to themselves, and how they have assessed it using *ucs*. Again the research aims specifically to discover what STMBC's understanding of *uc* was and whether it has changed and why, and this is placed in the context of the government and regional advice and STMBC's own specific concerns.

This window uses a case study approach and analyses the relevant material by looking at the way STMBC constructed *uc* through investigating the argumentation of their key ideas, through the need for it to be assessed, through the methods and content of their *ucs* and through their view on government advice. These have been set within a temporal setting to see how STMBC's ideas have evolved through time and have also been compared against this research's models as a fixed point.

The chapter starts by setting out the reasons for choosing a case study, and why South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough (STMBC) was chosen in particular. It will describe the case study design, drawn primarily from Yin (Yin:1993 and Yin:1994) with some contributions from other authors where they appear particularly relevant. The chapter will then pose the key questions for this section, relating them back to the main research line of inquiry, discuss the data that was collected, when, how, and why, and describe how the material was analysed. It will then describe the relevant points of STMBC. The analytical section looks firstly at how STMBC argues their case; secondly at how they use *ucs* to support this case and in other ways; thirdly it looks at the *ucs*' methods and content and finally it looks at STMBC's views on recent government advice. Finally the chapter concludes by drawing these various strands of analysis back together and weaving them into the main fabric of this research to reflect on the conclusions in relation to the research questions outlined in the introduction (chapter 1).

9.2 Case Study Methodology

9.2.1 *The Reasons for a Case Study Approach*

The third important window illuminating the concept meaning of *uc*¹ is its usage at the implementation stage i.e. at the local level.² To understand more deeply how *uc* was being interpreted and incorporated into local policy, a research method was needed which allowed a more detailed analysis of its usage and understanding. Gillham (2000) argues that one of the strengths of the case study method is its ability to:

deal with the complexity, embedded character and specificity of real life phenomena (in contrast to the experimental science type approaches)

Gillham (2000), p.4

As these were the very issues that this research inquiry sought to consider in relation to the conceptual understanding of *uc* and its usage in the complexity of the local authority's own changing circumstances, and in relation to the changing national and regional policy context in which the local authority is situated, a case study method appeared best for this particular aspect of the research. Furthermore, as a part of the overall research, the case study also helped in developing an understanding of the concept of *uc* on the basis of the context and the experiences and perceptions of the individuals involved, as they tried to use the idea in policy formation, rather than just through the dry text and method argumentation analysis.

In this research a single case of one local authority,³ drawing together many different streams of data to explore more thoroughly,⁴ is used to explore how local authorities charged with assessing *uc* are developing the idea in connection to their other concerns and policy context.

¹ As has been highlighted in this research's overview (chapter 3).

² This has partially been explored through this research's *ucs* survey as many of the 22 *ucs* came from local authorities (see *Figure 5.4* chapter 5). However the emphasis there was on the methods used by local authorities (and others) to assess *uc*; it did not reflect on how *uc* was being interpreted by these various authorities in their wider policy context, nor could it, as such analysis needed more detailed local information than was available in the survey cases.

³ In this research one case study was chosen. This case is unique and illustrative and consequently provides insufficient evidence to draw any universal conclusions. However, the surveyed *ucs* suggest that two or three case-studies would be equally unique and would still be insufficient to draw any universal conclusions. Nevertheless, as a further line of inquiry, a comparative study looking at other cases from a specific locality would be interesting (Newsome et al (2002) reflected on *ucs* practices in the North East: this was a Newcastle University internal 'Linked Research Project' with 5th year diploma/2nd year M.A. research students, organised by Wood), and from around the country to see how different authorities are considering *uc*, why this might be, and to what effect.

⁴ Than could be done through the survey of *ucs*.

9.2.2 *The Choice of South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council (STMBC)*

The most influential reasons for choosing STMBC were pragmatic. Part of this ESRC CASE award research's co-sponsoring arrangement was that it would be included as a case study (Hull:2001 unpublished). Additionally, this co-sponsoring arrangement gave early and relatively easy access to key individuals and information sources, which would have taken time to gain from any other authority.

These reasons alone justify the choice of STMBC as this research's case study. Moreover, STMBC itself represented an interesting case. It is a small authority in terms of its size and population with a declining population, situated in the North East where housing abandonment has recently been recognised as a problem (Mumford and Power:1999; Power:1999; Kelly:1999). This suggested that STMBC, as a North East authority, should have had no shortage of housing opportunity nor any need to ascertain its *uc*. Yet STMBC was interested in *uc* at an early stage in the concept's history, prior to *PPG3:2000* requiring it. It first engaged with the concept via the North East Arup Study, providing policy and statistical information as requested to the *ucs* authors; later, within STMBC itself, some practitioners were reflecting on the ideas as part of their *UDP* ratification process in relation to issues of environmental capacity and housing requirement.

STMBC and Newcastle University staff connected through these housing requirement considerations and its likely impact on the local environment. This collaboration eventually generated this research. The original contact was via an unrelated research dissemination seminar on the North East's contribution in accommodating the projected household increase, organised by Hull (1996) for TCPA (see Hull:1996 p.155-174). This connection developed further, with STMBC staff contributing initially to a research option at Newcastle University on 'Regional Strategic Issues' (1997). Subsequently, a project aimed at developing a methodology for considering the urban and environmental capacity of STMBC's green belt, in the context of increased housing requirement, to contribute to their *UDP* inquiry report emerged.⁵ This developed into an ESRC bid which resulted in this research's funding.⁶

⁵ The report for this work is unpublished and unavailable.

⁶ This early interest in *uc*, and the academic institution and practitioner collaboration on *uc* and the methods of *ucs* was not unique to STMBC with, during this period (1997-8), Barton of UWE assisting Baker Associates in the South West Study, Hooper of Nottingham Trent University assisting Land Use Consultants in the Wolverhampton Study, and De Montfort University assisting Entec with their East Midland Study Manual.

Therefore, STMBC represented a local, accessible authority that already had a history of reflecting on the issue of *uc*, and an intention to continue to do so, based on its own particular context and the information being offered by central and regional government on the issue of *uc*, housing and environmental issues.

9.2.3 *The Case Study Design*

The case study design draws predominantly from Yin (Yin:1993, Yin:1994) but also reflects on ideas from others (noted accordingly) where Yin's seem inappropriate or insufficient for some reason.

It is a single case, holistic case study (Yin:1994 p.38-42), describing one authority's reflection on the concept of *uc* within the setting of its specific locality, unique issues, and particular timeframe.⁷ The case study is illustrative of the local level conceptual influences, demonstrating the complexity of the context in which the concept of *uc* is interpreted through argument, assessment and use. Without claiming that it is particularly representative of other authorities' thinking and practice,⁸ this case study aims to explore these complexities, highlighting and illustrating how local authority concerns reflect local authority thinking in relation to *uc*, its assessment and its contribution to land use planning, and how these have changed with changes in government advice and their own specific situations, and the ability and inclination of local authorities to accommodate these changes.

Therefore the case study is exploratory (Yin:1994 p.41), and its finding must be viewed as pertaining specifically to STMBC rather than universally applicable. However, it does provide an illustrative example comparable to other, similar, illustrative examples. Moreover, for this research the case study findings enrich the survey findings by allowing the analysis of the local circumstances in which an *uc* was carried out. So, although this is a single case study, it relates back to the survey cases, deepening the exploration of the research questions and ideas in the first instance and acting as a 'methodological triangulation' point in the second⁹ (Patton 1987 p.60).

⁷ The use of 'unique' is not as Yin uses it (Yin:1994 p.39). He suggested a 'unique' case was rare or extreme, and this rarity was precisely why it was studied as a single case rather than as multiple cases. Here, the argument is more an acknowledgement that STMBC, like other authorities, have a unique set of circumstances, and these cannot therefore be taken as commonplace, from which general principles can be drawn; but as it was not these unique set of circumstances that precipitated the choice for South Tyneside over the choice for some other authority, South Tyneside is not being considered as a 'unique case' in the way that Yin implies it.

⁸ Demonstrated not to be the case through the survey findings.

⁹ With the case study verifying the survey findings and vice versa.

Organisationally the study focused on STMBC. It did not aim to explore STMBC's wider relationships laterally with other local authorities, or vertically with the regional and sub-regional organisations, and how these influenced the concept and assessment of *uc*. This has been left for further research.¹⁰ It also did not explore the inter-departmental relationships of STMBC and their impact on STMBC's thinking on *uc*.

STMBC's Economic Development and Promotion Section provided the majority of the information, but some came from other departments, notably Development Control and Housing, both of which were represented at the workshop day 2001. The data fell into 3 categories: oral data, written data, and the researcher's own observations.

The oral data was gathered from a range of different meetings.

- Formal regional meetings:

These were organised by Government Office for the North East (GO-NE), to monitor progress and share ideas on how the authorities were completing their respective *ucs*. Here notes and minutes of meetings were used.

- Informal meetings between STMBC practitioners and the researcher:

These verged on spontaneous discussion (Gillham:2000 p.21) between the researcher and practitioners at STMBC throughout the research period, and provided opportunities to explore their understanding of *uc*, their *ucs* method and contextual issues and policy positions. These meetings were noted at the time, minuted by the researcher and submitted to the relevant individuals for comment.¹¹

- Researcher's presentations of the research:

This was part of Newcastle University/STMBC sponsoring relationship. The emphasis was on the researcher's work and progress, and it is recognised that these meetings may have influenced STMBC's thinking. They also provided the researcher with further opportunities to monitor STMBC's *ucs* progress and their current concerns. The minutes of these meetings were also distributed to participants for comment.

¹⁰ During this research, it emerged that different regional and local authorities were interpreting the 'co-ordination' remit quite differently, resulting in very different approaches and organisational structures. This difference in understanding of co-ordination as it relates to *ucs* methods and practices by local authorities and regions would be an interesting avenue for further investigation.

¹¹ The submission of minutes and transcripts to STMBC for comment was thought to be an important feature of the overall case study design giving the authority opportunity to indicate any inaccuracies, discrepancies or misunderstanding, ensuring that information represented the organisation correctly.

- 2001 Workshop

In this research's second year (2001), shortly after the publication of *TtP*,¹² key STMBC staff¹³ came by invitation to a full day workshop at Newcastle University, to reflect specifically on STMBC's need to complete an *ucs*, available *ucs* methods and the issues these addressed and raised, in the light of new government requirements, their own planning process, and their local context. The research aims focused on how the practitioners argued their understanding of *uc* as it related to STMBC, and the choices they made about completing an *ucs* and the reasons for doing it. They also focused on the *ucs* method choices the practitioners made and why. The research also considered the STMBC practitioners' view on government's perception of *uc* and *ucs*. In data collection terms, for this research, this workshop was effectively a participant observation event (Gillham:2000). The meeting was recorded, transcribed and copies were given to STMBC. This information constitutes one of the main sources of material used in this research's analysis.

The day was structured around the government's new requirements and advice, with the researcher presenting some of this information, and the practitioners were given space to talk together on how these related to their particular issues and concerns. The advantage of this workshop method was that it allowed discussion amongst the practitioners to occur which highlighted points of agreement and contention. However, some participants were quieter than others, some points may have been lost through interruptions, and transcribing was difficult.

- Culminating semi-structured interviews:

The case study was closed in 2003 through final interviews with key practitioners (also present at the workshop). These reflected on STMBC's *ucs* methods and the reasons for their choices. They also reflected on STMBC's understanding of *uc* in 2003, how their understanding of *uc* had changed, and why this might be. These interviews were completed at STMBC, taped, transcribed and given to the practitioner for comment.

¹² *TtP* had come out at the end of December 2000; this meeting was held early in March 2001.

¹³ Identified by the researcher and STMBC: they included the Senior Assistant Director, a part-time Planner responsible for the *ucs*, the Policy Team Leader, a Local Development Manager, a Senior Planner, Policy Team, and an Assistant Planner, and a representative from the Housing Department.

The written material was also mixed. Both Gillham (2000)¹⁴ and Yin (Yin:1994 p.81) noted a distinction between the types of documents available, and Yin's emphasis¹⁵ was particularly useful as it drew attention to the different purposes of documents, and the different processes of producing them, their reliability and the biases that might be built into them;¹⁶ all points for this research to reflect on and bear in mind as part of the analysis. Certainly the texts from STMBC reflect the full range, including:

- memoranda: by staff for their own personal use and for others in their section to use
- minutes of meetings: within the organisation and beyond the organisation
- internal reports: such as the *ucs* themselves
- externally produced reports commissioned for STMBC, such as the Comedia Report (2002)
- formal public documents: e.g. *Adopted UDP* (which had a lengthy ratification process)

It should be noted that by August 2003,¹⁷ STMBC had reached the consultative stage of their *ucs* and were having it approved internally, prior to sending it out to housebuilders, estate agents and the Environment Agency for their views and comments. It is anticipated that this will result in some further reduction of their findings. STMBC also anticipate carrying out some development brief work on the sites included in the *ucs*. Whilst it would have been interesting to have been able to comment on these further aspects of the *ucs*, it was not possible due to the time constraints of this research.

This research's use of these documents varied; some provided contextual and policy background information both regionally¹⁸ and locally,¹⁹ and others provided the data for analysis,²⁰ reflecting how STMBC's planning for housing, the environment, and urban regeneration related to their understanding, assessment, and use of *uc* (see section 9.5).

¹⁴ Documents: letters policy statements, regulations and guidelines, archives 'things that go back in time but which may provide a useful longitudinal fix' (Gillham:2000).

¹⁵ Yin's types of documentation include letters, memoranda and other communiqués, agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings and other written reports of events, administrative documents-proposals, progress reports and other internal documents- formal studies or evaluations of the same 'site' under study, newspaper clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media.

¹⁶ From a quick note to 'self' on a Wednesday afternoon to a full planning inquiry spanning a period of 10 years to establish the latest *Adopted UDP* (1999).

¹⁷ I.e. at the time of writing. This constituted the closure of this research's case study.

¹⁸ E.g. Government Office for the North East (1999) *RPG:1 Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (Draft)* London: TSO - referred to elsewhere as *RPG1:(Draft)*.

¹⁹ E.g. Comedia (2002) *From Ordinary to Extraordinary: Transforming South Tyneside's Future: First Impressions and Interim Findings*, South Shields STMBC - referred to elsewhere as the Comedia Report

²⁰ E.g. *ucs* working papers, *UDP* etc.

Figure 9.1 List of this research's case study texts, with the key documents indicated

Report	Date	Referred to in this research as	Key
<i>PPG1: Tyne and Wear Regional Guidance</i>	1989	<i>PPG1: Tyne and Wear Regional Guidance</i>	
<i>Tyne and Wear: A Vision of the Future</i>	1989	<i>Tyne and Wear: A Vision of the Future</i>	
<i>Unitary Development Plan- Public Consultation</i>	1992	<i>Consultation Draft UDP</i>	✓
<i>Unitary Development Plan: Deposit</i>	1995	<i>Deposit UDP</i>	✓
<i>Functional Capacity of the Green Belt</i>	1998	<i>Functional Capacity of the Green Belt: Briefing Note</i>	✓
<i>North of England Assembly Urban Capacity Study Final Report</i>	1998	<i>North East Arup Study</i>	✓
<i>RPG1:Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (Draft)</i>	1999	<i>RPG1:(Draft)</i>	
<i>South Tyneside Brownfield Potential Survey</i>	1999	<i>South Tyneside Brownfield Study</i>	✓
<i>Unitary Development Plan: Adopted</i>	1999	<i>Adopted UDP</i>	✓
<i>Housing in the North East: A Framework for Action:2000</i>	2000	<i>Framework for Action:2000</i>	
<i>Site Survey Proforma for South Tyneside's Urban Potential Study</i>	2001	<i>Site Survey Proforma for South Tyneside's Urban Potential Study</i>	✓
<i>South Tyneside Urban Potential Study Background Information</i>	2001	<i>South Tyneside Urban Potential Study Background Information</i>	✓
<i>South Tyneside Urban Potential Study Outline Methodology</i>	2001	<i>South Tyneside Urban Potential Study Outline Methodology</i>	✓
<i>Urban Potential Study Evaluation of non site-specific potential</i>	2001	<i>Urban Potential Study Evaluation of non site-specific potential</i>	✓
<i>Workshop Transcripts</i>	2001	<i>Workshop 03/01 (tape 1-3)</i>	✓
<i>Catch the Spirit: South Tyneside's Cultural Strategy</i>	2002	<i>Cultural Strategy</i>	
<i>Continuing to Change, Continuing to Improve - South Tyneside's Housing Strategy</i>	2002	<i>Continuing to Change</i>	
<i>From Ordinary to Extraordinary Transforming South Tyneside's Future: First Impressions and Interim Report</i>	2002	<i>Comedia Report</i>	
<i>Housing in the North East: A Framework for Action Update 03 2002</i>	2002	<i>Framework for Action: 2002</i>	
<i>The South Tyneside Estate Agents' Survey: Private Sector Analysis</i>	2002	<i>The South Tyneside Estate Agents' Survey: Private Sector Analysis</i>	
<i>Housing Needs Study</i>	2002	<i>Housing Needs Study</i>	
<i>Moving Towards A Better Future: South Tyneside's Community Strategy</i>	2002	<i>Community Strategy</i>	
<i>North East England: Changing Housing Markets and Urban Regeneration</i>	2002	<i>The CURS Report</i>	
<i>RPG1:Regional Planning Guidance for the North East</i>	2002	<i>RPG1:2002</i>	
<i>Interview Transcripts</i>	2003	<i>Interview (date)</i>	✓
<i>South Tyneside Urban Capacity Study 2003 (Consultation Draft)</i>	2003	<i>South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft)</i>	✓
<i>Minutes of meetings (with dates)</i>	1999-2003	<i>Minutes of meetings (with dates)</i>	✓

Finally, personal impressions of the area, the personnel and the organisation were formed (Yin's direct observation category of evidence, Yin:1994 p.80) through research visits to STMBC and the borough; these, whilst perhaps relevant, are highly subjective and will normally not be used, but they will have influenced the research analysis.

Together, these different information streams build up to reflect the context from which STMBC's key issues arise and need to be understood. They also form a body of evidence demonstrating STMBC's understanding of *uc*, analysed here in the same way as the government texts (see chapter 3). This body of evidence shows how this understanding relates firstly to their own localised issues, and secondly to their choice of *ucs* method-types and assessment-content. When compared with this research's earlier findings, it was possible to ascertain what STMBC's understanding was, whether it had changed over time and why this was. It was also possible to consider how STMBC's understanding of *uc* related to the government's evolving position and also to the government's method preferences.

The method of analysis (see below) was primarily ongoing throughout the research period, culminating in a more detailed in-depth analysis near the research's completion when other parts of the research could be used to inform the thinking of this part.²¹

9.2.4 The Case Study Analysis

The key questions for this research's case study analysis were:

- 1.) How is the concept of *uc* understood and used in STMBC, and why is this the case?
- 2.) Has STMBC's concept of *uc* changed over time, if so how and why?
- 3.) How does STMBC's conceptualisation of *uc* relate to the government conceptualisation of *uc*?
- 4.) How does STMBC's conceptualisation of *uc* relate to STMBC's methods, and do these accord with government's preferences?

These questions related back to the main research questions (chapter 1), with the case study providing a fuller example of how *uc* is being conceived at the point of implementation.

²¹ Although it should be noted here that it was not the intention of the research to pre-empt the findings of the case study, through forcing expected findings gained from other parts of the research onto the case study, as this would undermine the purpose of the case study altogether, and invalidate the findings completely. Here the findings from previous sections of the research were used as points of references against which the case study material could be compared, not into which they could be forced.

This research sought to draw out STMBC's understanding of *uc* through investigating the way they had argued and justified it during the research period (1998-2003). It also sought to highlight the local contextual influences on this understanding, and to compare this to the government's evolving position on *uc* and the method biases. From this it was possible to see, firstly, how the local level context impacted on the use and understanding of *uc*; secondly, whether *uc* was being understood, used and applied coherently; and thirdly, whether the trends and biases at the local level were the same as at the government level.

The case study analysis replicated that found elsewhere in this research, with key oral and written evidence being analysed for their argued construction of *uc* (see chapter 3), and the chosen *ucs* methods and assessment-content being analysed for their biases. Through analysing STMBC's argumentation and concept association, it was possible to establish what STMBC's construction of *uc* was and, once this was established, whether it adhered more to this research's Constrained Model or Opportunity Model of *uc* (as points of reference; discussed more fully in chapter 4). Here, due to some distinct differences in STMBC's early conceptual construction of *uc* from those of this research's models, it became necessary to depict STMBC's early construction of *uc* diagrammatically to demonstrate these differences. Through this analysis it was also possible to see whether this conceptualisation of *uc* had moved over time.

Using STMBC's two *ucs*, the South Tyneside Brownfield Study and the South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft), transcripts from the workshop and minutes from meetings, the research reflected on the content and methods of these *ucs* in relation to this research's assessment-content analysis (chapter 8) and method-types (chapter 7). From this it was possible to gauge whether STMBC had made method and assessment-content choices more like this research's Constrained Model or more like its Opportunity one. This was then compared with the analysis of STMBC's argumentation to see how coherently the *ucs* seemed to fit with STMBC's argued construction of *uc*. It was also possible to compare these method-types and assessment-content choices with government's preferences and advice, to see how well they accorded with each other. From this it was possible to ascertain whether STMBC's conceptual understanding of, assessment of and use of *uc* was moving in the same direction as government's and whether they were moving at the same pace.

This analysis demonstrated that:

- STMBC's construction of *uc* in relation to the borough in and around 2001 was very constrained – even more constrained than this research's Constrained Model.
- In adopting the new government requirements STMBC's construction had moved, although not as far as the Opportunity Model.
- Aspects of STMBC's *uc* methods and content did not comply with their argumentation, but helped to explain some of the changes in their thinking.
- The use of *ucs* as underpinning evidence in support of key policies (e.g. housing in *UDP*) fixed the *ucs* assessment to more constrained methods.
- There is a perception that government policy does not adequately reflect the local issues of the North East and that this divergence is continuing.

9.3 Description of South Tyneside

South Tyneside is situated in the North East Region of England, on the South bank of the River Tyne, bordered to the east by the North Sea and to the south by Sunderland, with Gateshead lying to the West (see *Figure 9.2*)

Administratively, South Tyneside, now consisting of 20 wards, became a Metropolitan Borough in 1974 when South Shields, Jarrow, Hebburn, Bolden, Whitburn, and Cleadon were amalgamated into a single administrative entity: South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough. Historically, these entities have always had a shared history²² as well as their own distinctive identities.²³

²² STMBC's (2002) *Cultural Strategy* (p.24) noted that STMBC has a 'collective history that stretches back much further than that'.

²³ STMBC's (2002) *Community Strategy* (p.6) noted that 'each [of these] has its own characteristics, history and distinct identity'.

The overall organisational structure of STMBC is shown in Figure 9.3³ The
 Planning Policy section. This is currently
 as part of Community Development but

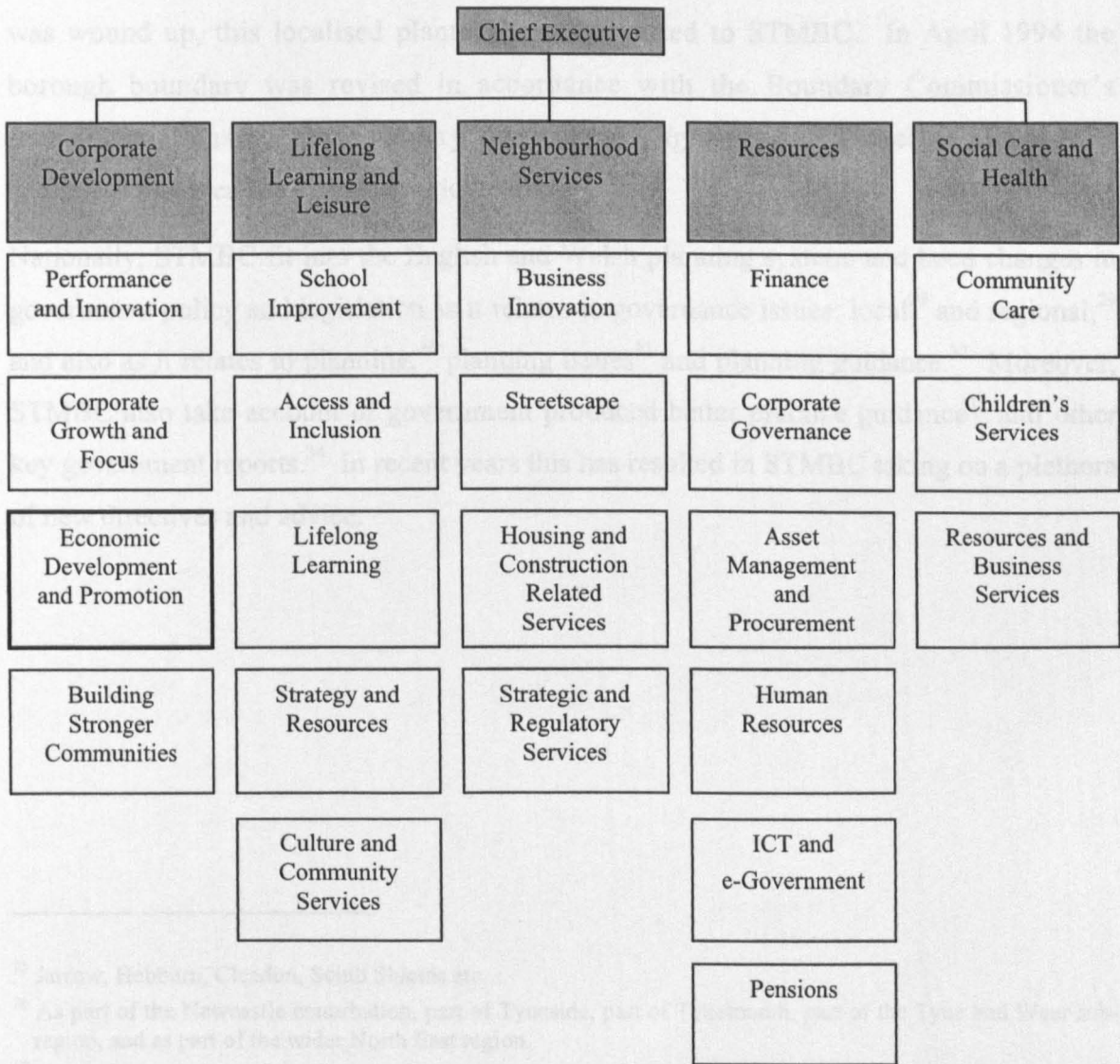
Figure 9.2 Ward boundaries of STMBC- modified from UDP



Modified by Graham Sout from South Tyneside UDP: Adopted Plan 1999 (figure 1.3 p.8)

The overall organisational structure of STMBC is shown in *Figure 9.3*.²⁴ The responsibility for completing an *ucs* falls to the Planning Policy section. This is currently situated in Economic Development and Promotion, as part of Corporate Development, but this is subject to change. However, whilst the Department's name and position in the organisation has changed the key personnel completing the *ucs* remained the same, although due to changes in staffing many of the people who attended the workshop in 2001 had moved elsewhere by 2003.

Figure 9.3 The Organisational Structure of South Tyneside MBC



(Modified from a diagram given to this research by STMBC)

²⁴ This was accurate in August 2003 but is subject to change. A likely future change is for the Planning Policy Section to move to the Strategic and Regulatory Services, where it has resided before.

In terms of its regional profile STMB forms part of Tyneside, is one of the metropolitan boroughs forming part of the Newcastle conurbation, fits into the Tyne and Wear sub-region, and is part of the North East Region of England. Therefore STMB has distinct local identities,²⁵ an identity as itself, and a range of regional and sub-regional identities.²⁶ STMBC (*Cultural Strategy*) suggest that more should be made of these wider identities, a challenge apparently being taken up.

Between 1987-1997 the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (TWDC) operated in the Urban Development Area (UDA) along the south bank of the River Tyne (see *Figure 9.4*), executing much of the planning remit.²⁷ However in 1997, when this organisation was wound up, this localised planning remit reverted to STMBC. In April 1994 the borough boundary was revised in accordance with the Boundary Commissioner's recommendations to the boundary outlined in *Figure 9.4*. Therefore, STMBC's administrative area has changed periodically.

Nationally, STMBC fit into the English and Welsh planning system, and heed changes in government policy and legislation as it relates to governance issues: local²⁸ and regional,²⁹ and also as it relates to planning,³⁰ planning issues³¹ and planning guidance.³² Moreover, STMBC also take account of government produced better practice guidance³³ and other key government reports.³⁴ In recent years this has resulted in STMBC taking on a plethora of new directives and advice.

²⁵ Jarrow, Hebburn, Cleadon, South Shields etc.

²⁶ As part of the Newcastle conurbation, part of Tyneside, part of Tynemouth, part of the Tyne and Wear sub-region, and as part of the wider North East region.

²⁷ Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (1989) *Tyne and Wear: A Vision of the Future*, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear Development Corporation.

²⁸ E.g. Best Value.

²⁹ E.g. the greater recognition of the regional tier.

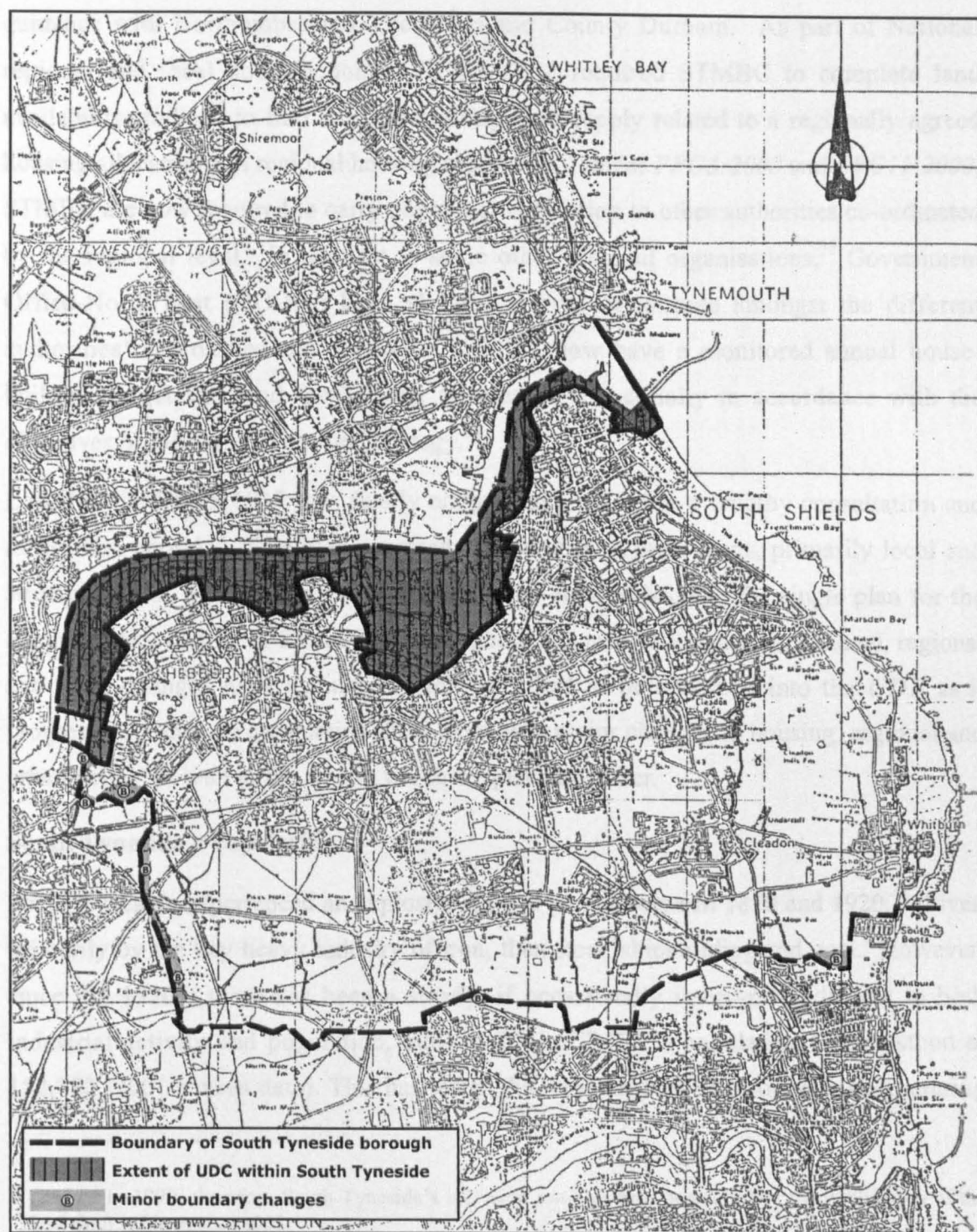
³⁰ E.g. the *Planning Green Paper* and the *Urban White Paper*.

³¹ Such as transport, and housing, sustainability and social inclusion.

³² Reflected in PPGs, Mineral Planning Guidance.

³³ Such as the *TiP* document, and advice on monitoring land release.

³⁴ E.g. UTF, *Planning for Sustainable Development*.



Modified by Graham Soult from South Tyneside UDP: Adopted Plan 1999
(taken from figure 1.1 p.2, and figure 1.2 p.4)

Regionally, STMBC was originally included in *PPG1: Tyne and Wear Regional Guidance* (1989) but latterly has been included in the relatively recent *RPG1 North East* (2002) (RPG1)³⁵, which amalgamated the metropolitan boroughs covered by the Tyne and Wear guidance with Northumberland, Cleveland and County Durham. As part of National regional and local housing policy, *PPG3:1992* required STMBC to complete land availability studies³⁶ to find a 5 year housing land supply related to a regionally agreed housing allocation and regional housing statements. Under *PPG3:2000* and *PPG11:2000*, STMBC are now required to carry out an *ucs* in relation to other authorities co-ordinated by the regional level. In contrast to some other regional organisations,³⁷ Government Office-North East (GO-NE) have allowed a level of latitude amongst the different authorities' approaches and methods. STMBC now have a monitored annual house-building target and land for housing is released sequentially in accordance with the objectives of the regional housing strategy.³⁸

Locally, STMBC's *UDP* was finally adopted in 1999, after a lengthy consultation and ratification period.³⁹ This plan superseded a number of prior plans, primarily local and structure plans, but also the plan for the TWDC area, to become the single plan for the administrative district of STMBC.⁴⁰ Throughout this ratification process national, regional and local changes have occurred which have had to be absorbed into the *UDP* as it progressed. Since its completion there have been major changes in housing, regional and urban policy, as well as the way in which we plan altogether.

South Tyneside's Population

South Tyneside experienced an explosive growth period between 1850 and 1920,⁴¹ driven primarily by the key heavy industry of iron, then steel, shipbuilding and coal. However, since the 1920's there has been a steady, if occasionally interrupted, decline in both industrial activity and population, until in 2001 STMBC's population figures stood at 152,780 (2001 census data). This has led to the need for both an economic restructuring

³⁵ Drafted in 1999- therefore South Tyneside's inclusion into this area began before the publication of the final draft in November 2002.

³⁶ The last land availability study was completed in 1999.

³⁷ E.g. North West Study Manual and more recently Yorkshire and Humber Study Manual.

³⁸ In the North East called 'A Framework for Action' (2000 p.6 and 2002).

³⁹ Consultation started 1992- *Consultation Draft UDP*; ratified and adopted in 1999).

⁴⁰ *Adopted UDP* p.6 gives list of plans it superseded.

⁴¹ Jarrow's population increased from 7,000 in 1851 to a peak of 35,000 in 1921 (Wilkinson:1939 p.71-72), and South Shields had a population of 11,171 in 1801 which took 40 years to double to 22,907 in 1841 but only 20 years to double again to 45,336, and 20 years to double again. It peaked in 1931 at a figure of 113,455 (taken from Gillanders:1974 p.18-19).

and a physical one, in terms of creating a more appropriate housing stock for today's population structure.

As elsewhere, STMB average household size has shrunk⁴² but the proportion of one person households has risen to 32% with a further 13% of households as lone parent households, and just under 9% are pensioner households with more than one adult. Therefore although the population of South Tyneside has decreased, its population's life choices are effectively increasing the need for additional housing in STMB, and these changes need to be accommodated in STMB's ongoing process of restructuring the housing stock.

South Tyneside's Housing Stock

Historically, due to the rapid growth of the area, to poverty, and to lower expectations (by the workforce), and more lenient accepted practices (by owners) early housing was provided through 'rows of houses ... hastily run up' (Wilkinson said of Jarrow p.72)⁴³ to add to the colliery rows to overcome the increasing housing shortage.⁴⁴ Consequently the housing stock was primarily badly built, poorly maintained⁴⁵ and unsanitary⁴⁶ tenement housing. Secondly, the local area suffered from intense overcrowding which continued into the 1930's and beyond,⁴⁷ enabling the Medical Officer for South Shields, Dr. Mathieson, to report that:

the population of the Borough has outgrown its accommodation. The general features are ...areas overstocked with dwellings and dwellings overstocked with inhabitants.

Medical Officer of Health Annual Report 1913 cited in Price (1982), p.12

His solution was for boundary extensions, town planning schemes and new residential development at 12 dw/acre beyond the crowded promontory, with financial assistance coming from government (Price:1982 p.12).

⁴² In 1991 the average household size was 2.51 persons/household; in 2001 this had reduced to 2.29 persons/household (census commentary 2001).

⁴³ Wilkinson (p.72) also noted an increase in tenemented houses in Jarrow from 300 in 1850 to 1005 in 1860.

⁴⁴ Wilkinson:1939 (p.73) noted a contemporary account (of 1860) 'that houses are wanted so badly that many are taken before they are finished. Houses already erected are crowded with lodgers'.

⁴⁵ See Wilkinson:1939 (p.73-75) and Price:1982 (p.8) for descriptions of 'houses quite unfit for habitation' and unable to be made fit. Price:1982 (p.8): 'these descriptions present damp, poorly weather-proofed, overcrowded dwellings with cramped rooms, bad ventilation, often set into steep banks (i.e. partially below ground) with shared middens, and a single external shared tap'. Cleet:1979 presented a collection of local photographs commissioned in the later 1930s to show the conditions of many of these houses just before slum clearance.

⁴⁶ Wilkinson:1939 (p.75-76) noted shared outside privies above the level of the lower levels of the house, causing slurry to flow into the house, and houses built where privies had previously been with, of course, no remediation between times to put right the condition of the ground from its previous use.

⁴⁷ In 1931 a third of the people were still living at a density of more than two persons per room. 35% of the families still occupied dwellings of not more than two rooms. Central Ward had a density of population of 139.2 people/acre (Wilkinson:1939).

The first council housing estate, Cleadon Park,⁴⁸ completed by South Shields Borough Council as the beginning of their slum clearance scheme, was finally finished in 1932,⁴⁹ demonstrating a relatively early start for council intervention, and once started the council's programme of clearance and house building was extensive, producing more than 12,000 dwellings between the end of the war and 1970, now part of STMB's housing legacy. The current stock has about 67,500 dwellings, of which 57% are owner occupied.⁵⁰ 33 % are council-owned, 6% are housing association and 2% are privately rented (*Continuing to Change* p.24). Currently most of the new build housing is produced by private housebuilders, with some contribution from housing associations.⁵¹ This will be reflected in tomorrow's housing type and tenure legacy.

STMBC did not have the vacancy problem found elsewhere in the North East (Leather et al.:2002 (subsequently referred to as the CURS Report:2002);⁵² and GO-NE (*Framework for Action*:2002),⁵³ with voids standing at about 3.7%, although they have identified 'pockets' of low demand and difficult to let housing,⁵⁴ and the CURS Report⁵⁵ identified some 'at risk' housing⁵⁶ in STMB. STMBC have been aware for some time of the general preference for certain locations over others, and for owner-occupation over other tenures within the borough. They have also been aware of the knock-on effects this can have in the creation of housing abandonment in particular housing types, tenures and locations, but they still feel that there is not a vacancy problem in STMB to the scale identified in the CURS Report.

⁴⁸ Now itself part of a 5 year regeneration programme (South Tyneside Today 07/12/01).

⁴⁹ Depending on whom you read, this was either revolutionary -South Shields Borough Council (Haigh:1950)- or beset with administrative difficulties, inertia, and corruption (Price:1982 and Wilkinson 1939).

⁵⁰ Compared with regional average of 65%.

⁵¹ 15 houses in 2000, no houses in 1999 or 2001 and less than 5 houses in any one year going back to 1993 (*Continuing to Change* Report 2002, p.55).

⁵² Leather, P., Lee, P., Murie, A. (2002), *North East England: Changing Housing Markets and Urban Regeneration*, Birmingham, Centre of Urban Research Studies, University of Birmingham- referred to by STMBC's practitioners as the CURS Report.

⁵³ Government Office for the North East (2002), *Housing in the North East: A Framework for Action Update March 2002* Newcastle GO-NE.

⁵⁴ *Continuing to Change* (2002, p.29) identified 461 units out of the 22,184 units in management as difficult to let and a further 1,299 dwellings considered to be low demand. These figures themselves represent a marked decrease from the 2001 figures -low demand: 5,368 and difficult to let: 1,478- brought about by a review of the allocations policy resulting in 40 changes and an increase in demolitions.

⁵⁵ STMBC questions this report on the grounds of its data sets and underlying assumptions.

⁵⁶ I.e. housing and housing areas thought to be on the brink: at risk of becoming difficult to let, and abandoned. One of the problems noted by Mumford and Power (1999) is the speed seemingly viable housing becomes difficult to let and then abandoned.

South Tyneside's Socio-Economic Well-Being

The rapid growth of single industries, the cycle of boom and bust periods and then the long decline of the main industries has helped to generate a socio-economic legacy of uncertain, often poorly-paid employment,⁵⁷ 'one class towns'⁵⁸ with 'more than half of the "working"⁵⁹ population out of work'⁶⁰ (Roberts:1938 p.26) and a discrepancy between the labour force and the work available.⁶¹

In 2001, socio-economically STMB is still classed as one of the most deprived boroughs.⁶² The 2001 Census data indicates unemployment in STMB (6.3%) as double the national average (3.4%), but STMB quote a figure of 9.4%, which conceals the disproportionately high figure of male unemployment at 13.4% (*Continuing to Change* p.54).⁶³ This is likely to influence housing needs and housing preferences. Health has historically been bad in STMB due to poor housing and employment conditions, with high mortality rates,⁶⁴ and this has left a legacy of poor health and disability.⁶⁵ However, some of this may now be attributed to the higher than average retired population.⁶⁶ Yet these high levels of economic inactivity have a tendency to create a more dependent population, which has to

⁵⁷ This was normal industrial practice at the time, not a specific feature of this particular area. However, shipbuilding was particularly susceptible to boom and bust cycles: 'Productive capacity in one great yard has to be maintained to handle an output of 60,000 tons per year and yet there are times when only 1,620 tons are launched. To ensure ability to deal with the highest possible demand men and productive resources are left lying idle during the greater part of the trade cycle. For the men the industry accepts no responsibility.' (Wilkinson:1939 p.103).

⁵⁸ Roberts cites the fact that out of a population of 24,000 Hebburn had less than 50 persons belonging to the employing classes. 'There are no professional men except the doctors and clergymen whose work compelled them to live in the town.' (Roberts:1938 p.26).

⁵⁹ His quotation marks.

⁶⁰ Wilkinson:1939 sets the figure in Jarrow in 1935 at 72.9% (Wilkinson:1939 p. 259).

⁶¹ 'The lighter industries on the much publicised trading estates offer jobs suitable mainly for young girls and youths when the real difficulty caused by the collapse of the heavier export industries is that of the adult man.' (Wilkinson:1939 p.262).

⁶² STMB has 6 out of 20 wards amongst the 5% most deprived wards in England (out of a possible 8,414 wards) and a further 6 are amongst the next 5%, making 60% of South Tyneside wards amongst the most deprived 10% in England (*Continuing to Change* p.55).

⁶³ These figures do suggest quite a different scale of unemployment from that felt historically, but should not be allowed to detract from the very real need felt by the individuals currently unemployed and seeking work. As Stephen Hepburn MP for Jarrow noted, on gaining his seat, for an unemployed person they were 100% unemployed (Hansard 21 May 1997 column 654).

⁶⁴ Wilkinson:1939 p.78 noted that in 1883 'deaths from zymotic disease (small-pox, scarlet and enteric fever and the like) were much higher in Jarrow than in towns of similar size. In 1883 these deaths were 51 per ten thousand as against 24.6 the average of 50 other towns.'

⁶⁵ *Continuing to Change* noted a continuing problem of ill health and disability, with South Tyneside suffering a higher than average permanently sick or disabled population that is unable to work: 9.5% compared to the national average of 5.5% (2001 census data).

⁶⁶ The figure here is 15.4%, compared to the national average of 13.6%. This represents quite a change in STMB, but where this once was seen positively attributed to longevity of life and good health, now it is seen more as a harbinger of doom (e.g. Comedia Report p.16-17) associated with the area's lack of opportunity, and the moving away of the economically active seeking new opportunities elsewhere.

be adequately accommodated by the council. Therefore, whilst the population remains older and less economically active, it is thought likely that their housing needs will be reasonably well met through the existing stock. However, if economic activity should change then the likelihood is that housing preferences will change and the housing stock will need to alter accordingly.

South Tyneside's Environmental Quality

Environmental quality and social amenities in South Tyneside have also consistently been presented as poor:

There is a prevailing blackness about the neighbourhood. The houses are black, the ships are black, the sky is black, and if you go there for an hour or two then you will be black. The architecture of the place has a strong tendency to extreme simplicity -the straight up-and-down brickism common to manufacturing districts- and the atmosphere is of smoke, smoky.

Newcastle Evening Chronicle in 1858, unknown author, cited in Wilkinson (1939), p.72

And in the 1930's the lack of facilities still appears to be an issue, as Roberts reflected in his discussion of Felling, Hebburn and Jarrow (in comparison with Newcastle), noting that:

... they haven't any chromium-plated shops or stone built clubs or Assembly Rooms with lavish chandeliers, (not even dusty ones).

Roberts (1938), p.25

Moreover others note that the high levels of pollution still persist, with J.B. Priestley writing in 1933 that:

there is no thin air in Jarrow. It is thick air, heavy with enforced idleness, poverty and misery

Priestley (1933), p.313

In contrast, more recently STMBC's environmental quality is beginning to be noticed: its beaches have achieved European Flag Status;⁶⁷ its river views have been highlighted (*Continuing to Change*); some of its geology, flora and fauna have gained national and international status;⁶⁸ and about half its land is green belt.⁶⁹ This improved image has been worked for, and STMBC want to encourage its continuance and enhancement by adopting policies aimed at protecting these locations, and improving their character, and use.

⁶⁷ The European Blue Flag, awarded to Sandyhaven in 2002, is an internationally recognised quality assurance symbol for the beaches' environmental management and visitor facilities.

⁶⁸ *Adopted UDP* (p.98-103) highlights a number of designations aimed at protecting these environmental assets determined at all levels of government: local, regional, national and European, and presents a case for trying to up-hold and, where appropriate, extend these designations.

⁶⁹ Physically STMB covers a total area of 6,443 ha, with a built up area of 4,079 ha and a green belt of 3,364 ha (figures taken from *Continuing to Change*:2002 p.54).

Consequently they are endorsing the SSSI status of part of their magnesian limestone and their coastline, developing wild life corridors (*Adopted UDP*), increasing their cycleway, bridleway and footpath network, and contributing to the Great North Forest project to increase their tree cover. However, it is due to these concerns and their need to preserve the green belt that STMBC feel in part constrained whilst recognising the necessity (more fully argued in section 9.5.6).

To Sum Up: This brief description of STMB's socio-economic history helps to emphasise some of STMBC's particular concerns over housing condition, density, and local preferences. It also helps to provide some sense of the housing legacy and the housing stock that STMBC actually have to manage and where possible enhance; and it also helps to give insight into why environmental and social concerns are seen as being of particular importance to STMBC.

9.4 STMBC's Understanding of *UC* in Relation to the Models

STMBC's depiction of *uc* as it related to STMBC in the period between 1998-2001 was closer to this research's Constrained Model of *uc*. Like other authorities, STMBC related the concept of *uc* primarily to land-use planning. Within this context STMBC acknowledged, but challenged, the preferencing of housing above other land uses. This reflects the Constrained Model. STMBC practitioners made few links between *uc* and urban regeneration or urban form in particular, and only a limited amount about design⁷⁰ (all elements of the Opportunity Model). This suggests that they did not relate these particularly to the issue of *uc*.

STMBC practitioners unanimously agreed that in relation to *uc* the borough was small, highly constrained and very densely developed in its urban areas. Consequently many of them reiterated the thought that further development in urban areas would be detrimental-i.e. town-cramming. Many of the practitioners also raised concerns that the population in outlying villages had, due to smaller household size, fallen below the critical mass of population needed to maintain facilities in these villages, and that this made the viability of these outlying villages questionable if further development did not occur (i.e. rural village under-use). Consequently, the argued location for further housing development was the villages over the main urban area.

⁷⁰ For them, design was not equated to density but rather to quality, and they were cautious of designing in higher densities, believing that often the density was achieved but the design was not.

Taken together, STMBC were effectively arguing that *uc* was for them not a theoretical finite position for the future (this research's Constrained Model), but that the capacity of the urban area had already been reached. This is a more constrained position than this research's Constrained Model. STMBC's answer to this predicament was to exploit the village under-use by building additional housing there. This was a win-win construction, saving the villages from losing services and the urban areas from town-cramming. However, it also entailed some minor encroachment into the green belt – 'village rounding' - which emerged as the most contentious element of the argument. The practitioners focused on sustainability in terms of urban and village viability rather than on transport nodes, land-take, and urban form, further underpinning their chosen position as the sustainable option.

Furthermore, at the regional level, when discussing the regional allocation of housing to the different boroughs,⁷¹ STMBC argued a case that they were a highly constrained borough, with limited space to accommodate additional housing, and expressed a desire not to increase their housing allocation, suggesting instead the need to reduce their allocation. This was accepted and STMBC housing requirement was reduced from 5,000 to 3,000 dwellings. The shortfall had to be reallocated elsewhere within the region, so effectively STMBC succeeded in locating this shortfall to other parts of the region.

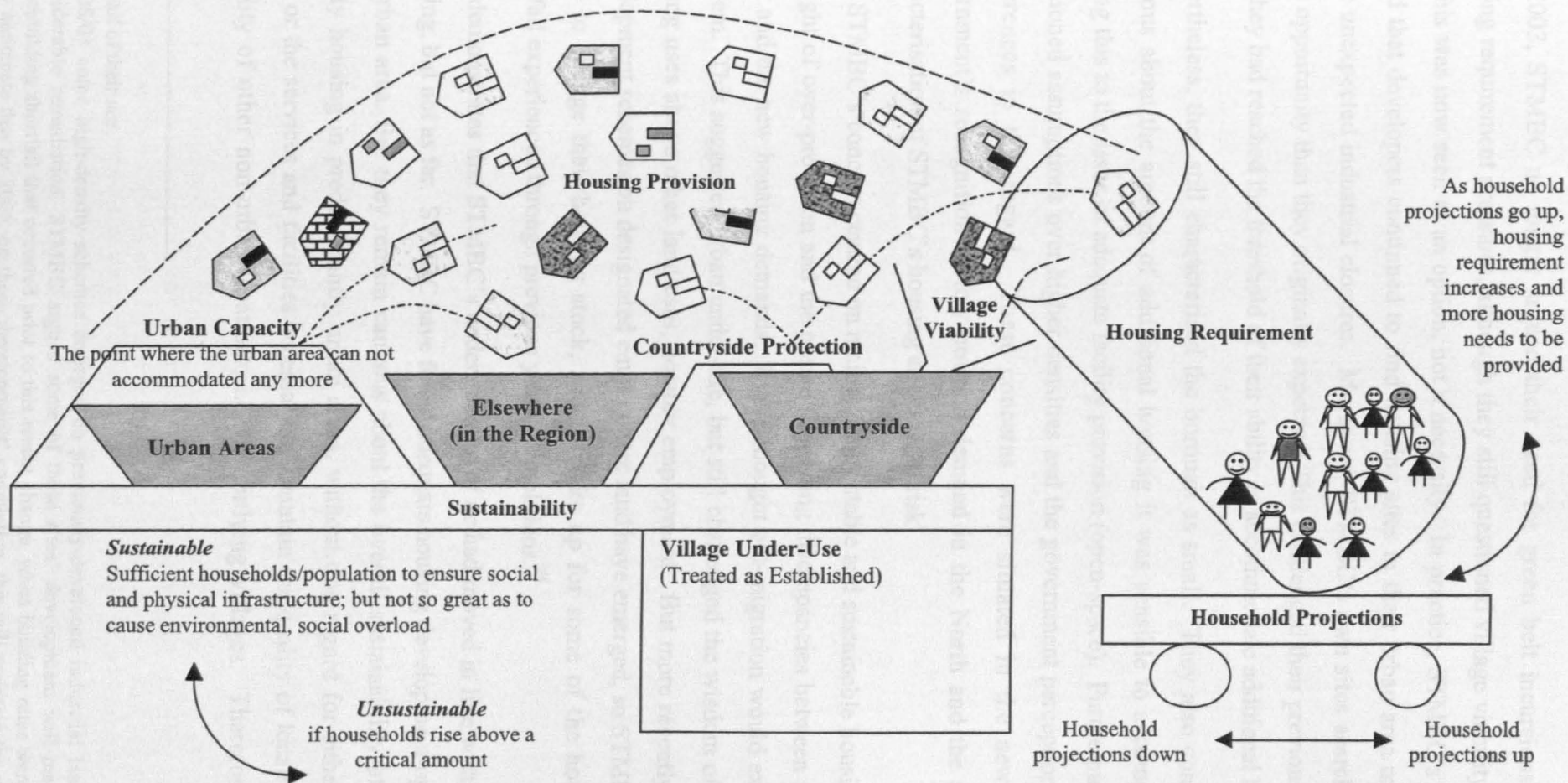
They accepted their responsibility to provide sufficient housing for their population in accordance with national and regional expectations,⁷² but questioned the projections via a challenge on households' ability to continue to shrink indefinitely,⁷³ and argued their particular constraint problems. These elements combined to present a construction of *uc*, as it pertained to them, more constrained than that of this research's Constrained Model (see *Figure 9.5*).

⁷¹ This discussion included representatives from the individual local authorities and regional representatives.

⁷² Highlighted by their 1999 involvement in the regional guidance (RPG1), with KB working specifically on the draft housing section, confirmed 08/03.

⁷³ CA: workshop 03/01 tape 1: 'It's just a comment there about household formation basically. I mean, quite clearly household formation cannot keep going up and up as they are currently. I mean, there has to be a point where [it] stop[s].'

Figure 9.5 Diagram of STMBC's Construction of Urban Capacity(UC) in 2001



By 2003, STMBC no longer argued their need for green belt incursions induced by housing requirement pressures, although they still questioned village viability as an issue, but this was now seen as an option, not a necessity. In practice, STMBC's practitioners found that developers continued to find housing sites in their urban area mainly due to some unexpected industrial closures. Moreover, STMBC's own sites search⁷⁴ identified more opportunity than they originally expected. This challenged their previous assumption that they had reached the threshold of their ability to accommodate additional housing.

Nevertheless, they still characterised the borough as small. They also continued to be cautious about the amount of additional housing it was sensible to accommodate, still linking this to the issue of adequate facility provision (open-space). Furthermore, they still questioned assumptions over higher densities and the government perception of people's preferences in this regard. These concerns were situated in the new context of government's recognition of low housing demand in the North and the now official characterisation of STMBC's housing as being 'at risk'.

Here STMBC's concern centred on maintaining a stable and sustainable housing market in the light of over-provision and the possibly growing discrepancies between the available stock and the new housing demands. It was thought out-migration would exacerbate the problem. This suggested urban under-use, but still challenged the wisdom of considering housing uses above other land uses, notably employment. But more recently, residential development schemes on designated employment land have emerged, so STMBC are using these to change their housing stock, and to make up for some of the house-building shortfall experienced through previous years' demolitions.⁷⁵

This demonstrates that STMBC's understanding of *uc* had moved in line with government thinking, but not as far. STMBC have found adequate housing development-opportunity in the urban area. But they remain cautious about the overall sustainability of developing mainly housing in predominantly urban areas, without due regard for either other land uses, or the services and facilities necessary to maintain the quality of localities,⁷⁶ or the viability of other non-urban locations, i.e. the outlying villages. Therefore, they still

⁷⁴ As part of their *ucs*.

⁷⁵ In 08/03 some high-density schemes emerged on previously-developed industrial land that needed considerable remediation. STMBC argued some of these sites' development will make up for the housebuilding shortfall that occurred prior to this recent change, when building rates were at a net loss. They anticipate that by 2006, on these developments' completion, this will maintain the overall housing stock at about the same numbers, but that its council/ private sector profile will have changed a little.

⁷⁶ Which might paradoxically be lost through changes in use.

position themselves nearer the Constrained Model of *uc*, but perhaps now for quite different reasons, and with perhaps some forays towards the Opportunity Model.

9.5 The Argumentation of STMBC's Position

9.5.1 The Issue of Urban Density and Town-cramming

In 1998-2001 STMBC's construction of their borough's characteristics in relation to *uc* included a clear acceptance amongst the practitioners that high density was a problem for the borough. In all instances bar one density was taken to mean dwellings/ha rather than population.⁷⁷ Density (as built form) was linked to a range of different issues, and kept re-emerging as a concern and in the workshop context (2001) no-one challenged this or felt the need to qualify it.⁷⁸ Therefore STMBC usually characterised density negatively. Consequently, the maintenance of existing densities, and the idea of increased densities, were usually seen as town-cramming.⁷⁹

This perception of high density as town-cramming was argued in two ways; firstly, in the way that STMBC acknowledged town-cramming as a possibility. This was done both publicly, with both the *Deposit* and *Adopted UDP*'s using the term town-cramming,⁸⁰ and semi-privately, in internal documents⁸¹ and through discussion, e.g. at the 2001 workshop.⁸² This effectively suggested that town-cramming was an inevitability if much development occurred in the urban areas. Secondly, town-cramming was presented through a negative description of the impact it would have. Again this was done both

⁷⁷ The only reference to density in terms of population rather than in terms of built form came from DW, who noted that they were the second most densely populated district in the region.

⁷⁸ DW highlighted the fact that STMBC was the 'second most densely populated district in the region (workshop 03/01 tape 1). PD stated that 'we are developed very densely' (workshop 03/01 tape 1). KB noted the 'heavy urbanisation factor, and highlights the existence of 'Tyneside flats at 81dw/ha' (a figure mentioned in *Functional Capacity of the Green Belt: Briefing Note*). FP thought this figure was 'two and a bit times the Secretary of State's suggested good practice' and that if [they] remove [Tyneside dwellings at 81 dw/ha] on any large scale [they were] not going to get them back at that density', i.e. if they redeveloped the 'most vulnerable' stock there would be net housing loss not net gain. (workshop 03/01 tape 1).

⁷⁹ The 1998 *Functional Capacity of the Green Belt: Briefing Note* cited areas with 81 dw/ha and discussed town-cramming, questioning the ability of the urban area to accommodate much more additional housing.

⁸⁰ 'The Borough Council is concerned to ensure that over-development of land within the built up area does not lead to town cramming or reduce the ability to provide open space and land for community facilities' (*Deposit/Adopted UDP*: p.15/p.17)

⁸¹ *Functional Capacity of Green Belt: Briefing Note* (1998).

⁸² E.g. 'I think we're also going to have clashes with that, with, people's amenity and town cramming- both real and perceived' (DW: workshop 03/01 tape 3).

publicly (see footnote 73) and semi-privately.⁸³ Consequently, its occurrence through higher densities was thought to be worth contesting.⁸⁴

In other discussions with STMBC the over-provision in some facilities,⁸⁵ notably education (school places),⁸⁶ had been noted. This over-provision could have been used to formulate an argument of urban under-use, and indeed was used to argue village under-use (see section 9.5.4). However, the physical form of the urban area and the lack of green space took precedence over these under-uses. Therefore, the authority consistently presented the main urban area as dense and in danger of cramming to the detriment of those living there.⁸⁷

In 2002-2003 STMBC still saw open-space as a key issue. However, it was included in their *ucs* survey⁸⁸ despite government guidance to the contrary.⁸⁹ This might suggest movement in their thinking on *uc* towards this research's Opportunity Model. However, in almost all instances -perhaps not surprisingly- the sites were later excluded on sustainability grounds. Here the emphasis was on the sustainability of the urban area, and quality of life issues were highlighted. Nevertheless the process did allow STMBC to reflect on the value of their open-space, albeit with an emphasis on likely retention.⁹⁰ This resulted in STMBC concluding that they needed more open-space in some areas, not less, although maintenance was thought likely to be a problem.⁹¹ Therefore, although ready to

⁸³ 'I think we can damage our urban area in terms of continuing to develop on brownfield land trying to squeeze every bit of development that we have in areas and wards where we already recognise there is a shortage of public open space' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2)

⁸⁴ KB thought that to try to retain this (Tyneside flat) density would mean multi-storey, out of character housing which in his view would be something to contest national government's requirements over (workshop 03/01 tape 1).

⁸⁵ Meeting minutes 11/00.

⁸⁶ Housing provision for young singles and elderly households would not rectify the over-capacity problems in education. Moreover as KB indicated, in interview 03/03, people's housing preferences change throughout life, and many move out of the urban area prior to having children. This raises questions about whether young couples would remain in the urban area at the point that they started a family, and the implications for school places if they did not. However, simply to provide houses might not be enough to rectify this problem.

⁸⁷ 'The people in the urban areas are having every bit of land built upon with little thought to green space or recreational open space.' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

⁸⁸ *South Tyneside Urban Potential Study Outline Methodology*; South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft); JW interview 04/03.

⁸⁹ *TtP* omits this development-opportunity from its list of development-opportunities (*TtP* p.10).

⁹⁰ 'Some of the sites we have discounted were existing open-space, which we still feel have a higher value as open-space' (KB: interview 03/03).

⁹¹ 'There is never the incentive to provide [open-space] and to maintain it. Generally speaking, local authorities have become increasingly cost-conscious about things like maintenance commitments. Creating grassed space, public parks doesn't seem to be on the civic agenda any more' (KB: interview 03/03).

explore the use of open-space for housing development, the authority quickly concluded, on a site by site basis, that it could not be done.

Secondly, in 1998-2001, STMBC inferred town-cramming partly through the shortage of existing housing sites and then through the difficulty of finding additional ones. This also challenged, through inference, the government's presumption of urban under-use (see chapter 4). STMBC argued this conclusion partly through their various successes, and partly through the ongoing legacy of STMB's built form and housing stock.

Included in STMBC's successes,⁹² they highlighted the already high percentage of housing development that had occurred on previously-developed-land during the 1990s, that these opportunities were gone, and that other major development-opportunities were not apparent.⁹³ This was primarily based on the cost of remediating the remaining sites and the perceived subsequent lack of development take-up due to this expense.

STMBC supported this claim on the basis of experience⁹⁴ and on what they could see was left.⁹⁵ This, they felt, indicated that 'past successes in recycling Brownfield may mean that the future supply of land from Brownfield will be more restricted' (South Tyneside Brownfield Study: par 1.4 no page number). Again this was argued publicly in the *UDP* (see *Adopted UDP* p.17), and more privately,⁹⁶ and the South Tyneside Brownfield Study was thought to evidence their claim.⁹⁷ In 2001 this position had changed very little, although some felt they would achieve more than they had first foreseen. STMBC also thought that the difficulties of the remaining previously-developed-land and the remediation costs would make development of the remaining sites difficult.⁹⁸ STMBC did not think that developers would propose the densities needed to make these sites viable⁹⁹

⁹² My word not theirs, although the way they discussed it indicated that they viewed these as successes.

⁹³ KB first made this point at this researcher's appointing interview 07/1999. It has also been made in the *UDP* (*Deposit UDP* p.15, *Adopted UDP* p.17), in the *Functional Capacity of the Green Belt: Briefing Note*, the South Tyneside Brownfield Study, and the 2001 workshop.

⁹⁴ The South Tyneside Brownfield Study depicted this experience through the yearly brownfield:greenfield ratios of housing completion totals in STMB.

⁹⁵ The South Tyneside Brownfield Study showed that at the higher densities of 50 dw/ha, STMB could only accommodate 1050 dwellings on brownfield sites: a third of their total requirement.

⁹⁶ '[The government's] housing target is of 60% brownfield ...our existing brownfield completion [rate is] at 90% and has been for years. The danger is now that we have nowhere to go. It's going to go down...so it's going to be a landslide' (FP: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

⁹⁷ The South Tyneside Brownfield Study was used at both the local and regional level to argue the lack of brownfield land for housing in STMB.

⁹⁸ 'There is little scope to identify much more housing land [relates to figure of 5,000 dwellings] within the urban confines... without heavy reliance upon land arising from the clearance and reclamation of existing urban sites' "windfalls" (*Deposit UDP* p.15).

⁹⁹ 'We didn't think that developers would develop at these high densities- whatever the remediation needed' (DW: interview 03/03).

and therefore assumed that the sites were commercially not viable. Therefore, given the lack of obvious opportunity caution in relation to windfall contributions was considered to be the only responsible view to take.¹⁰⁰

However, since 2001, previously-developed-land has continued to come forward. This might be due to the *ucs* survey drawing attention to previously overlooked sites. It might also be due to changes in developers' attitudes towards previously-developed-land in the new context of *PPG3:2000*.¹⁰¹ However, the continuing trend in STMB seems to be primarily due to some foreseen policy changes in other parts of the authority¹⁰² and to some unforeseen (and unforeseeable) industrial closures, which could not be relied upon (i.e. windfall),¹⁰³ and which have contributed to the housing rather than industrial stock.

As elsewhere, STMBC raised the issue of sustainability in relation to developing previously-developed-land. It was thought that the current development patterns, emphasising urban centre housing and industry moving out,¹⁰⁴ effectively separated land uses. This, it was thought, was likely to result in fragmenting the internal cohesion of existing neighbourhoods; an increased need to travel and a greater reliance on unsustainable options, i.e. the car; and increased journeys in terms of time and distance. It was recognised that the reuse of previously-developed-land did reduce land-take elsewhere, and STMBC's recent experience demonstrated to themselves how this had alleviated their earlier constraint concerns. Nevertheless, they did not fully accept the sustainability argument put forward by government, preferring to remain cautious.

Furthermore, whilst they accepted that more windfall sites had emerged than they had anticipated,¹⁰⁵ they still remained cautious about over-estimating future windfall, as including these into their current housing figures¹⁰⁶ would have repercussions on the regional organisations' future expectations. Therefore whilst these sites gave STMBC

¹⁰⁰ This emphasis on the local authority's responsibility to ensure a reliable housing land supply needs to be set in the context that prior to 1999/2000, the emphasis was still on providing a 5 year land supply for housing (*PPG3:1992*) and up until 2000 STMBC were still trying (as required) to ensure that this occurred.

¹⁰¹ This may be an interesting topic for further research.

¹⁰² Notably a programme of school closures by the education department.

¹⁰³ KB and JW interviews 03/03.

¹⁰⁴ '...if you are going for sustainable development, presumably the first thing is to have jobs within range of people- ...we seem to be... pushing all the houses into previously-developed-land where we can, and allowing the industry to go out on the outskirts' (DW: interview 03/03).

¹⁰⁵ 'To some extent we were perhaps a bit pessimistic about the windfall sites that would come out of the woodwork' (DW: interview 03/03).

¹⁰⁶ 'The thing about windfall is that it is a dangerous element now, because if you identify land as white (i.e. whiteland) to bring forward for development, the line that the regional office is taking is that it is basically a departure and therefore in the additional assessment scrutiny, so you are far better having a planned figure that at least meets the underlying rate.' (KB: interview 03/03).

greater latitude than they first thought (Opportunity Model) they remained cautious over this latitude being boundless (Constrained Model).

Additionally, there was developer-interest in previously-developed-land, where remediation costs were high, as these became viable through the proposing of very high densities. However, STMBC remained cautious on the grounds of the developability and deliverability of housing on these sites. Here they questioned the viability of developing these sites, firstly, due to the difficulties and costs of remediation and the lack of funding packages for such schemes; secondly, due to the buyer demand for such dense housing;¹⁰⁷ and thirdly, due to its questionable liveability. It was thought that this very high density housing might in the longer term become problematic. Nevertheless it was thought that STMBC should provide some new build high-density urban housing to offer choice. This demonstrates a move away from the earlier position of equating higher density to town-cramming, and suggests a move away from their previously very constrained position. However, altogether STMBC's position on density in 2003 still remained constrained.

STMBC's second success has been its continuing maintenance of a viable housing stock, and this has continued to feed into STMBC's *uc* consideration. The council stock condition was considered to be 'generally good'¹⁰⁸ and STMBC also thought this housing stock continued to be viable in terms of vacancy rates and condition.¹⁰⁹

STMBC's own voids (approximately 3.6%)¹¹⁰ were close to the national void target of 3% (set by government). This figure allows for some slack in the system to enable movement and maintenance.¹¹¹ Taking this into account, STMBC appeared not to have a letting problem. Consequently, *PPG3:2000*'s suggestion of reducing voids was thought to be difficult and unlikely to produce much additional housing opportunity.

¹⁰⁷ 'I never did think it would be a case of trying to lever people into estates or apartment blocks of 50 dw/ha because I don't think that the *majority* of people want to live in those circumstances...we need to be far more subtle about injecting high density into areas that were never intended to take them' (KB: interview 03/03).

¹⁰⁸ 'Currently there is no substantial problem with the fitness of the public, private or voluntary sector stock, but that this is the result of considerable demolition and re-housing commitments in the 1960's and 70's and the clearance of the worst of the local authority's own system built or pre-fabricated units in recent years' (*Deposit UDP* p.13).

¹⁰⁹ FP: 'In terms of voids... 3.6 [%]'.

GD: 'And going up. But ... we're mainly talking about the possibility of a few estates. ... and in the private sector, which is far higher than ours, but [it is] still very low in South Tyneside.
(GD and FP: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹¹⁰ Although this was unevenly distributed across localities and tenures, with some localised spots identified as low demand or difficult to let.

¹¹¹ 'Most people in the housing market will tell you that 4[%] is healthy for slack in the system to enable people to move within it. I was never happy that we went down to 3%, it was just the Secretary of State's guiding figure, but at 3.7[%] I don't think that is worrying' (KB: interview 03/03).

The reasonable quality of the remaining council stock also suggested that the demolition of housing estates, which might result in increased densities through redevelopment, was an unlikely option. Moreover, STMB's high density housing legacy effectively made the demolition and redevelopment of such housing untenable,¹¹² given STMBC's inability to build new housing at equivalent or higher densities, and consequently raised the need to find further additional land to take the surplus.¹¹³ So, in 1998-2001, this suggested, if anything, a more constrained view of *uc* than this research's Constrained Model.

In 2003, STMBC's vacancy rate remains much the same (3.7%),¹¹⁴ and GO-NE continued to aspire to 3% (RPG1:2002 par. 4.67 p.79). However low demand housing and housing abandonment had become an increasing concern in the North East (RPG1:2002 par 2.29 p.29), and a growing national concern.¹¹⁵ In this context the CURS Report (2002), looking at the North East regional housing market, suggested that STMB had a housing stock that was 'at risk' (see 9.3), a view queried by some practitioners.¹¹⁶ To meet this new concern over the continuing viability of the North East housing market, GO-NE allowed the demolition of stock without equivalent replacement (i.e. net loss),¹¹⁷ and even suggested that demolition should be a part of renewal.¹¹⁸ Effectively this allowed authorities to demolish unpopular (high vacancy) high density housing without replacing it.

¹¹² FP noted that STMBC would 'have to think about intensification in certain circumstances' but noted that 'it is not going to happen' (implying a concern of over-development/town-cramming) and reiterated that the redevelopment of existing housing would result in lower densities not higher ones: 'you're not going to get the densities that you've got now' (workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹¹³ During this period the number of dwellings being demolished outstripped the number of houses being built. (KB: interview 08/03).

¹¹⁴ Census data, KB interview 03/03, and a figure of 3.8% in ST Housing Strategy (*Continuing to Change*), compared with a regional average of 4.5% (taken from RPG1:2002).

¹¹⁵ See Deputy Prime Minister's statement in Parliament on *Sustainable Communities Housing and Planning* (see Hansard 18/07/2002).

¹¹⁶ KB noted that 'according to the CURS study, the fact is that we have a high proportion of so-called "housing at risk". We do not perceive it as that; we see a very good relationship between the stock available and the income of the people who occupy it. If that cycle is broken in some way then we may have problems, we may have certain unpopular dwellings, but we did a straw poll... of local estate agents last week and out of 10, one said there was some perceivable weakening of the market for older terraced property, the other 8 said they saw no problem with it, the other one said that there was falling off but in line with all other properties, so in effect nine out of ten of the people locally in the property market trade do not perceive this kind of weakness that CURS see as an indicator of housing at risk so I think there are loads of issues that are questionable.' (interview 03/03).

¹¹⁷ GO-NE 2002: 'given the poor quality, lack of demand for some of the older stock which may be demolished ...replacement stock will not always be required. ...Development Plans should not seek compensatory housing provision for dwellings removed from the stock because of low demand and abandonment' (RPG1:2002 p.79).

¹¹⁸ 'Authorities should consider whether the needs of regeneration can best be addressed by improvement of existing stock or whether demolition represents a better option as part of a broader course of action to regenerate local communities, improve the environment and increase numbers of and access to local jobs' (RPG1:2002 Policy H1 p.79).

This perhaps throws up one of the paradoxes at the centre of the *uc* concept. On the one hand it increases development-opportunity by facilitating the redevelopment of overcrowded (in terms of dwelling units) but under-used (in terms of population) housing areas, whilst on the other hand reducing the overall stock, effectively reducing *uc*.

This change in regional policy addressed many of STMBC's earlier housing redevelopment concerns, and the demolition rates went up¹¹⁹ as they did elsewhere in the region. In the case of STMBC this was portrayed as part of STMBC's effective management, saving stock before low demand and abandonment set in, and as the stock has not been abandoned,¹²⁰ STMBC have been able to argue its replacement on employment sites where development schemes have come forward. Like GO-NE, STMBC saw this as a stock restructuring process to ensure its continuing take-up, effectively continuing to maximise the use of the remaining existing housing stock. This position accepts the existence of a proportion of under-use that needs addressing perhaps through stock reduction. Effectively it presents this under-use as an opportunity not a constraint, despite the reduction in stock, making it closer to this research's Opportunity Model.

At the workshop in 2001, STMBC noted that *uc* extended the land availability study to include buildings as well as sites.¹²¹ However, the practitioners saw little opportunity in empty homes or housing redevelopment (already discussed above). They also saw little opportunity arising from residential conversion¹²² or commercial conversion into housing.¹²³ Previously-developed-land was acknowledged as STMBC's main provider, but (as already said) was thought to be a diminishing resource and intensification was thought to be questionable (already discussed). Therefore their view was that most of these options would produce very little additional housing and that the constraints being felt would continue.

¹¹⁹ KB: interview 03/03.

¹²⁰ Here the regional guidance does not seek replacement where there is actual abandonment, but STMBC have begun to argue that their stock is not abandoned but 'at risk', and therefore where new housing schemes have emerged, often on previously-developed-land, that these schemes should be allowed, even if they take STMBC over the 150 dw/yr in the short-term, because their stock has been reduced in recent times through demolitions. This acts as replacement to maintain the same number of dwellings over a longer timeframe. Here the space that has often been found has been employment sites, that councillors were previously reluctant to release for anything other than employment uses (KB: interview, 08/03). This indicates something of a shift in STMBC's thinking.

¹²¹ 'The first thing that struck me when ... I looked at *TiP* ... was that it's not just about pieces of available land; there are lots of other sources of capacity identified ... reuse of vacant buildings and car-parks and all sorts of other [things], I [was] quite struck by the variety of possibilities.' (JW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹²² CA noted that a dozen (dwellings might come) from sub-division of housing (workshop 03/01 tape 2).

¹²³ 'Flats over shops has a very, very low yield and I do not anticipate that this would change radically' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

In 2003, having completed their *ucs* calculations and prepared their study to go out for consultation, South Tyneside found that most of their housing would continue to be found from previously-developed-land, having looked at LOTS¹²⁴ as part of their *ucs* 2003 (Consultation Draft). STMBC calculated that 45 dwellings might be forthcoming from this development-opportunity, but JW (interview 04/03) noted that the approaches used elsewhere (in terms of calculation) were not necessarily applicable to their circumstances, and questioned the reliability of the figure in relation to reality.

Taken together in 1998-2001, the limited opportunity perceived within the various source options and the detrimental impact of developing some of these, e.g loss of green space, suggested that STMBC's perception of the borough's urban area was not that it was in danger of town-cramming, (a position akin to this research's Constrained Model) but that the urban area had already reached that point (a position more constrained than this research's Constrained Model). This view was held across all participating departments with little dissent, and the documents demonstrate it had been held for a long period of time. However, by 2003, events had occurred that encouraged STMBC practitioners to change their view on the borough, on town-cramming, and on *uc*. Town-cramming was no longer argued and urban areas were no longer presented as 'already full'. Instead STMBC conceded that sites had materialised and that urban under-use was greater than expected. However, much of this under-use was related to the restructuring of a dense housing stock to produce a sparser housing stock. Therefore, although there was movement in STMBC's position on *uc*, circumstances had effectively provided conditions that STMBC had previously argued for through the case of town-cramming and full capacity.

9.5.2 The Compact Nature of the Borough

STMBC also saw the borough as small in size both publicly¹²⁵ and privately,¹²⁶ and they used this as part of their argument for requesting reduced allocations¹²⁷ out of the total regional housing requirement.¹²⁸ This smallness also emerged in the way others depicted

¹²⁴ STMBC refer to these as flats over shops.

¹²⁵ UDP describes it as 'small and compact' (*Adopted UDP* p.20).

¹²⁶ At the workshop PD noted that it was '...a very small borough' (workshop 03/01 tape 1) and CA: 'we are a very small fish' (in relation to the regional housing allocation 3,000 out of a possible 10,000) (workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹²⁷ STMBC have consistently argued for less housing allocation, in contrast to most of its neighbours which have argued for increases, and in 2001 had to provide 3,000 dwellings out of the full regional requirement of 110,000 dwellings.

¹²⁸ This debate on housing numbers is the demand side of the housing argument, and produces the context (if agreed prior to an *ucs* being completed) of how much opportunity needs to be found. In the context of the PPG3:1992 'Predict and Provide' delivery process, the numbers assigned were critical in that a borough

STMB with the South Tyneside Enterprise Partnership, noting that it was the smallest of the Tyne and Wear districts in both area and population (South Tyneside Enterprise Partnerships:2003). The *Adopted UDP* quote (see footnote 125), shows that STMBC connected 'being small' with 'being compact' which was then interpreted as 'being constrained'. This was not limited to their presentation of their densely built urban areas, but also related to the borough's boundaries: the river and sea to North and East and abutting Gateshead and Sunderland, with only their green belt preventing coalescence.¹²⁹

This view did not change over the period to 2003, although STMBC have found a greater ability to accommodate additional housing in the urban area than expected, and have succeeded in protecting the green belt. However, this may be a reflection of the borough's reduced housing allocation (to 3,000 dwellings) and the change to monitored annualised rates of 150 dw/yr, as well as the regional organisation's willingness to accept a net unit loss on housing demolitions,¹³⁰ as much as STMBC's ability to find additional opportunity.

had to find 5 years' supply of land for housing. In the new system (*PPG3:2000- PMM*) the *ucs* should inform the demand argument on what it is thought the supply might be under certain policy and contextual (notably the market) conditions (scenarios), and from that the location of additional housing demand can be better surmised.

STMBC used the South Tyneside Brownfield Study in this way to demonstrate their inability to accommodate the higher numbers suggested to the region. The regional strategy left the placement of 4,000 houses open, i.e. to be allocated at a later date, when authorities' *ucs* are completed, and GO-NE and these authorities are in a better position to see how this outstanding amount might be accommodated. By 2002 RPG1:2002 p.81 presented this figure as 200 dw/yr unallocated for the period 2002-2006.

A perception held by certain practitioners within STMBC is that the *ucs* could be used to find sufficient opportunity for accommodating the current requirement of housing and that once this is achieved the *ucs* can stop looking for development-opportunities, although this was not advocated as STMBC's own approach. This practice would, in principle, effectively make the *ucs* an extension of the land availability study, in that it would look for land for the housing numbers, without aiming to restructure the thinking on how these opportunities are managed, and maintains the *ucs* position as being primarily responsive to the housing numbers rather than the housing numbers being allocated in response to the *ucs*.

¹²⁹ CA: 'We've got a river on one side and the sea on the third side of it [STMB] and the green belt on the rest of it on all of our land' (workshop 03/01 tape 1). It should be noted here that the context of this remark is that CA is arguing the artificiality of the green belt rather than supporting its maintenance, but this does not detract from the fact that he is characterising the development-opportunities under the existing circumstances as being very constrained.

¹³⁰ There was a time when RPG required demolished housing to be replaced by the same number of units as were demolished. This caused STMBC problems because of the relatively high densities of these dwellings, which effectively meant that STMBC would have to either accept a net loss, i.e. not replace all the dwellings, or find alternative additional land to build replacement dwellings, as well as the additional land for which they also were required to supply housing.

The new RPG directive made it easier to argue a case of not building replacement housing, as it accepted that within the North East there was an oversupply of dwellings, and therefore if there was some reduction in the stock this was now seen as more acceptable. However, in recent months STMBC have found a number of developers have been wanting to develop previously developed industrial land sites, previously classified as employment land. Therefore STMBC are now arguing (08/03) that the currently higher number of dwellings likely to come forward in the next 3 years (i.e. till 2006) reflect something of a putting back of the stock lost in recent years' relatively high demolitions. Consequently, they want to keep the 150 dw/yr regional expectation in the long term, but are happy to accept a slightly higher rate in a given year up to 2006, on the grounds that development occurs haphazardly, and that this makes up for some of the housing they have recently lost.

Nevertheless the number of windfall sites that did emerge, the number of remediation schemes that have come forward, the originally high number of sites surveyed as part of the *ucs*, and STMBC's commissioning of a further report on the viability of employment sites for employment, or alternatively for housing, all suggest that, although constrained, some *uc* opportunities may not have been fully recognised previously.

9.5.3 *The Housing Requirement and Household Projections*

STMB's smallness and constrained nature was used successfully to argue the need to limit the land for housing requirement. In the *Deposit UDP* this requirement appeared to be 5,000 dwellings. After the 1995 household projections, up until the beginning of 1999, the likelihood was that the housing requirement would rise, possibly to 9,000 dwellings (i.e. 4,000 more dwellings).¹³¹ However, this figure never materialised and the *Adopted UDP* cites the 5,000 dwellings suggested in the *Deposit UDP*.¹³² This figure was then reduced to 3,000, also in 1999.¹³³ STMBC argued for this reduction, using their influence in the development of the RPG,¹³⁴ the evidence of the completed South Tyneside Brownfield Study,¹³⁵ and they were aided by other authorities' requests for higher dwelling numbers to be allocated to them,¹³⁶ which they accepted. Therefore, STMBC successfully argued the case of its constraint and used that argument to establish their limited ability to take high numbers of additional housing.

To keep this current housing requirement in perspective whilst not decrying its importance, STMBC also argued that 3,000 dwellings was a relatively small issue in the context of

¹³¹ It was in this context that STMBC wrote the *Functional Capacity of the Green Belt: Briefing Note*, as they could not see how they could accommodate the additional 4,000 being proposed within the urban area. This document suggested a number of different housing requirement scenarios that might be expected of STMBC; at the time of the document 9,000 seemed most likely, but in the event the proposal did not materialise in official public documentation.

¹³² Within the *UDP* it is clearly indicated that this figure is not a fixed figure, but rather is subject to change, and the direction of that change is left open. At the time it was thought that the change might be to increase it, but in the event the change has been to reduce it.

¹³³ South Tyneside Brownfield Study par. 1.2 (no page number), *Framework for Action:2000* and RPG1:(Draft) (p.40).

¹³⁴ With KB working specifically on the draft housing section, confirmed 08/03; 'the amount of time we've invested in RPG I think [was] to protect the interests of South Tyneside. I think that if we hadn't put time into RPG we'd probably have wound up being stuck with a much heavier housing land requirement' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹³⁵ STMBC produced this ahead of most other authorities' (in the North East region) beginning to think about *uc* and *ucs* (regional meeting on *ucs* 03/01 research notes), and DW reflected that it was not very surprising that the 2 authorities with the highest densities (STMB and Middlesbrough) had got furthest in their thinking on *uc* (workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹³⁶ Notably Newcastle MBC which wanted to develop housing through the proposed development of Great Park and their *Going for Growth Strategy* (minutes of meeting 02/00 and KB interview 03/03).

their total housing stock (all tenures)¹³⁷ of around 67,500 dwellings,¹³⁸ argued both publicly (*Adopted UDP*)¹³⁹ and semi-publicly (the 2001 workshop).¹⁴⁰ This highlights the slowness of any change brought about by changes in housing policy, particularly when existing completions, and pre-existing permissions and allocations agreed under the previous system are still ongoing. Moreover, given firstly the importance of the private housebuilding activity in delivering this housing, and secondly the reduced rate of housebuilding since *PPG3:2000*'s introduction, it would appear that the shift in housing policy thinking, in terms of housing location, will take time to be expressed in built form. STMBC also felt that the pre-eminence of housing as an issue at the recent RPG panel meeting had been more evident, due to *PPG3:2000* coinciding with RPG's production and the need to demonstrate the observance of the new requirements.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless STMBC successfully argued for less housing at the RPG level 'which may or may not be a bad thing'¹⁴² (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1), reducing their housing allocation to 3000 dwellings (RPG1:(Draft) p.23). In arguing this case, STMBC accepted that, like other authorities, the borough had a numerically declining population, with a rising number of smaller households, and these needed housing,¹⁴³ putting STMB into the position where additional housing was needed despite this fall in population. However, whilst agreeing with this, they highlighted the uncertainty of the trends¹⁴⁴ and questioned the continuing reduction of household size,¹⁴⁵ and demonstrated an expectation that the housing requirement would go down not up, effectively challenging the need to provide for the full requirement. This argument is better suited to the Constrained Model of *uc*, with its

¹³⁷ 'It's arguable as well, that given the number of new properties that are going to be built in the next five decades compared with the size of the second hand market in South Tyneside, it's arguable whether its an issue that we really need to worry that much about' (JW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹³⁸ Rounded up figure of 1995 stock taken from *Adopted UDP*.

¹³⁹ 'There has long been a tendency in land use plans to consider housing land supply issues among matters of primary concern. Plans have a crucial function in that respect, but a major factor in determining the need for new homes is the current dwelling stock and its continuing ability to meet the needs of its occupants' (*Deposit UDP* p.15).

¹⁴⁰ STMBC were giving up the day to consider it as an issue after all.

¹⁴¹ KB interview 03/03.

¹⁴² The benefit of it would be supported by arguments posed by Bramley and Watkins:1995 and Green Balance:1994) (see chapter 2) for discussion; the cost of it would be argued by Holmans:1995 (see chapter 2). The application of these arguments as they relate to STMB is what STMBC have to judge.

¹⁴³ FP: workshop 03/01 tape 1. CA concurs with FP: 'virtually all our housing (requirement) is from household formation' (workshop 03/01 tape 1), i.e. their new housing requirement was being generated through new household formation within the borough, not through people moving into the borough needing to be housed.

¹⁴⁴ In the *Deposit UDP* STMBC presents four population trends of which the 'most optimistic scenario' (nil net migration) was seen as 'a somewhat artificial option' (*Deposit UDP* p.15).

¹⁴⁵ CA noted that 'quite clearly household formation can't continue to go up and up as it is at the moment. ...there has to be a point where it stops' (workshop 03/01 tape 1).

emphasis on the urban area's inability to accommodate any additional households, rather than the Opportunity Model, which emphasises the need for more population to preserve urban services.

In 2003 estimated figures appeared to show an increase both through migration¹⁴⁶ and through the formation of concealed households.¹⁴⁷ This may indicate that STMBC's policy to stop STMBC out-migration may be working, but they still appear to anticipate its continuance. STMBC practitioners also noted that other authorities were still of the view that building more homes and getting more jobs would turn these boroughs' out-migration around. However, they were concerned that if it continued, even if it was halved, the massive drive to increase their housing stock would over-provide, increasing slack in the system. Therefore they saw the solution as monitoring the build and take-up rates carefully, and not allowing the build rate to get too far ahead of the take-up rate (in the whole stock not just in the new build stock).¹⁴⁸ Whilst apparently accepting the likely urban under-use induced by a declining population, these arguments effectively equate to a constrained view of likely future market, and question the sustainability and wisdom of increasing housing production and the veracity of government's claim that housing can drive urban renewal, effectively maintaining a constrained view of *uc*.

STMBC also noted that under the current regional housing requirement, using annualised rates, they were expected to provide an additional 150 dwellings/year. This they felt was possible on their identified sites in the time period it was set in and in terms of maintaining the relationship between supply and demand. However, they thought that with increased site remediation a lag-time needed to be recognised in the annualised rates. This contrasts with their previous concerns over their housing requirement and is due partly to their *ucs* demonstrating more opportunity than they first thought and partly to the changes in requirement.

Taken together, STMBC's position in 2003 on household projections and housing requirement maintained their previous view of their *uc* in terms of the required numbers of

¹⁴⁶ Household migration showed a net increase of 279 households, although this was spread unevenly across the borough with some areas continuing to experience net loss.

¹⁴⁷ *Housing Needs Study* 2002 estimated 5,579 concealed households, out of which they anticipated that 555 would emerge in the next 5 years (i.e. would need to be housed).

¹⁴⁸ 'We are in the game of trying to stop out-migration, or at least to slow the rates down, but I think that is the policy of most of authorities in the conurbation. ...if the overall trend is still net outward migration that's the trend. Now to my mind there are two ways of looking at trends and therefore policy aspirations. Most of these authorities [are] about building more homes and getting more jobs in. My concern is that we are not all going to be equally successful and therefore there is a sound logic to being very careful about how far ahead the build rate is allowed to go...[ahead] of occupation, and even then someone has to keep an eye on the consequences' (KB: interview 03/03).

dwelling, but perhaps anticipated more slack in the system than they had previously thought. Effectively this suggested that the current housing stock is adequate to meet the housing need. In relation to this research's models, this indicates a move away from their very constrained view of *uc*, but still reflects constraint through the questioning of demand.

Around 1998-2001 STMBC argued that 'at the moment the provision is *generally in kilter* with need or demand' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1), effectively suggesting very limited under-use, and a stock that basically accommodated the needs and aspirations of the community. However there were suspicions that changes in incomes would alter this balance.¹⁴⁹ Elsewhere in this research this was demonstrated to reflect a Constrained Model of *uc* due to the implied lack of residual opportunity presented through vacant space. It also reflects the Constrained Model of *uc* through its acceptance of the existing balance in the housing stock, with its limited demand adequately supplied by the existing stock.

However, this statement also accepts that this state is dynamic, not static, with the likely change centring on tenure and location preferences, which would need addressing in the available stock. This allows argumentation space to move closer to the Opportunity Model, through the acceptance of new demands and preferences for new housing types which might override existing constraints (e.g. preferences for higher density living). However, in the case of STMB, the implication is that most of this change will favour areas beyond the urban area. Therefore, even in this construction the urban area is still presented as constrained through the questioning of its ability to provide for new demands and the preferred development options.

As already indicated, regionally there was a growing concern over the presumption of housing growth stemming decline, and the continuing market viability of housing in the North East, particularly in some locations and in some tenures. STMBC already recognised the dynamics of changing local preferences and the impact this might have on location and tenure choices, but asserted the continuing viability of their stock. In 2003 STMBC did accept the possibility of low demand in 'pockets', and they accepted that the non-alignment between demand and supply was likely to worsen if not addressed.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ 'That may change if we did get major investment and incomes went up. Then I suspect that there are elements in the housing stock that would cease to appeal.' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁵⁰ 'We have an eighty-year-old council-housing tenant waiting-list [i.e. many of the people still wanting council housing were in their 80s], and whilst they are comfortable with it [council housing] there is no guarantee that their kids are- in other words they [the kids] will move to more attractive, marketable, private-rented locations and image, and it does seem to be [that] this generation now will search out a private address in preference to just taking the keys over when grand-dad pops his clogs' (KB: interview 03/03 and see also STMBC's Housing Needs Study 2002 par.4.2).

However they refuted the CURS Report's findings of extensive 'at risk' housing in the borough, on the basis of the age and quality of the data the report used¹⁵¹ and some of the research's underlying assumptions.¹⁵² STMBC also questioned the process by which this report's findings were incorporated into regional policy, without, STMBC thought, adequate consultation.¹⁵³

STMBC argued that the overall market was working well, KB noted that local estate agents did not see STMB as having market problems (KB: interview 03/03),¹⁵⁴ and DW noted the number of housebuilders putting forward schemes on remediation sites previously thought untenable; both of which were taken as indicators that the market was working but that demands were changing and the stock needed managing to address these changes.

Therefore, the local housing stock needed some restructuring with regard to type, tenure, and localised image problems, but it did not need high amounts of additional stock. Therefore STMBC argued for some stock restructuring and reduction -through demolition- with an emphasis on making the remaining stock desirable to increase the take-up of latent stock. As already mentioned, this has elements of constraint- reducing the stock- but it accepts urban under-use, aims to increase this use, and reduces land-take (the Opportunity Model).

9.5.4 Village Viability: the Question of Village Under-Use

In the period 1998-2001, STMBC argued their non-development in the congested urban area on its inability to absorb more housing. However they also argued for the need of additional development in outlying villages for these to continue to be viable - effectively village under-use. Here, it characterised villages as dying, without development, due to low service take-up and service closures.¹⁵⁵ This emphasis on locating some development

¹⁵¹ 'Some of the data that has been used is quite old- e.g. the rates of outward migration have just about halved from the assumptions built into CURS' (KB: interview 03/03).

¹⁵² 'The CURS Report, which has become the basis of the emerging regional housing strategy...to me should have been challenged in an open forum before it ever got into regional planning guidance' (KB: interview 03/03).

¹⁵³ 'The perception that because you've got a high proportion of say socially rented housing, and that your stock is of a certain age etc. etc. means that it is quotes "at risk" is a questionable exercise' (KB: interview 03/03).

¹⁵⁴ The *South Tyneside Estate Agents' Survey: Private Sector Analysis 2002* noted that the market was becoming increasingly buoyant.

¹⁵⁵ 'Look at the numbers, the indicators, the vacant premises ...look at Cleadon- look at school numbers and their viability, public transport provision is, I would bet, is probably the lowest that we have compared to the rest of the borough' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2); 'the other [point] is viability of those settlements long term, and the nature of arrangements of [the] facilities they provide' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

in the villages was argued as an aspect of sustainability through maintaining village viability.¹⁵⁶ This village viability issue was used as a counter-claim to developing in the urban area, effectively being presented as an alternative location and challenging the good sense of over-developing the urban area whilst leaving villages to decline - the worst of both worlds.¹⁵⁷

Like the Constrained Model,¹⁵⁸ some antagonism was expected from rural protectionists,¹⁵⁹ but this did not in itself necessitate urban development, nor did it extend the urban area's ability to accommodate additional housing.¹⁶⁰

This argument relates closely to this research's Constrained Model, with its emphasis on developing sustainably in either urban or rural areas, instead of arguing a rural protection/urban development case (the Opportunity Model). Indeed, the presented case is that STMB's villages are best protected and served by allowing development, incidentally alleviating urban areas from this pressure- a win-win scenario.

In 2003 the vitality and viability of the villages was still an issue, although one planner was surprised at this and saw it as peripheral to *uc*.¹⁶¹ Certainly the link between urban area pressure and village viability had been broken, with village viability now being presented as an independent entity, discussed on its own merits, rather than as a counter to suggestions of urban area development.¹⁶² Here STMBC still argued the sustainability of ensuring the villages' survival as functioning places with adequate service and facility provision (see footnote 162). Moreover, other sustainable benefits were identified: firstly, the reduced need to travel, with communities accessing local facilities; and secondly, more

¹⁵⁶ 'In terms of the villages that we have in the green belt the only way I think of improving sustainability vis-à-vis the viability of the shops and services is actually to promote more development' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2); '...and how [sequencing sites] is best done clearly fit[s] in sustaining the villages and the rest of it' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

¹⁵⁷ 'What about the sustainability; economic social issues that surround supporting those villages? ... it's a cost benefit analysis of going into the green belt. The environmental impact is very obvious to most of us. What's the environmental social economic impact of planning more development into the existing built up areas?' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁵⁸ Signified in the model diagram by the countryside protection.

¹⁵⁹ 'I know the sweet residents of Cleadon will *really* look at going at that site between the academy and the corner of the village as they did last time' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

¹⁶⁰ 'Yes, but the people in the urban areas are having every bit of land built upon with little thought to open space or recreational open space whereas we are protecting the green belt for people who can afford the housing in the villages' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

¹⁶¹ 'I think ...a lot of peripheral issues came out in that workshop' (JW: interview 04/03, with regard to the viability of the villages, and the way it was talked about at the 03/01 workshop).

¹⁶² 'To maintain local services within [these villages] you might need to adjust the local threshold of the population.... We have lost things like banks in the villages because they are not seen to have the threshold of business. Does it go to post offices, does it go to the local dairy?' (KB: 03/03 interview).

sustainable travel patterns and modes of transport. Therefore, village rounding, which would include green belt incursion, was still considered as a possibility by some. However, now the emphasis was more strongly focused on the villages' needs, not external house building pressures, and it was acknowledged that a strong case would be needed.

This demonstrates a substantial shift in STMBC's position. Firstly, it severs the link between village viability and urban town-cramming, so that each case stood alone. Secondly it neutralised the negative characterisation of urban development as town-cramming to allow urban area development to be considered, easing pressure on the villages. This is effectively the converse of their previous position. Thirdly, the green belt protection issues increased the need for a strong case for village development, making development in the urban area in the current climate more attractive. Consequently, where development in the villages had previously been seen as inevitable it was now seen as a 'luxury of choice predicated on being able to make a sufficiently good exceptions case' (KB: interview 03/03).

9.5.5 Sustainability: Integration and Balance

Around 1998-2001 STMBC argued sustainability as being about balance and integration.¹⁶³ This too tended to feed into argument constructions similar to this research's Constrained Model of *uc*.

One issue of balance and integration centred on the sustainability of developing housing on designated employment sites. Here whilst STMBC accepted their dormitory town role, for both Newcastle and Sunderland,¹⁶⁴ they questioned the sustainability of developing housing without employment. They argued, firstly, that it created a disjunction between land uses, and unsustainable development patterns- creating the need to travel, the need to use less sustainable transport options and increasing travel distances.¹⁶⁵ Secondly, they argued that changing the designation on employment sites hindered their efforts to reduce

¹⁶³ Many of these balancing comments have already been discussed in the light of their content.

¹⁶⁴ 'The other side is, I think, that the council is accepting a change in the role of South Tyneside, much more based in not seeking to provide every job needed in the borough and much more based on a commuter. I don't want to use the word, sort of, you know... dormitory role' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁶⁵ Here their main point was that if they produced housing and other authorities produced jobs, then rather than reducing the need to travel they would in fact be increasing it. 'It doesn't hang at all together if one of the stated aims is to try and keep the people within their own neighbourhood ... it doesn't seem to me that you can keep people on their own threshold if you fail to provide employment opportunities for them' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

the Northern out-migration¹⁶⁶ and challenged the government's notion that re-designating employment sites was straightforward. Thirdly, they questioned the privileging of housing use over other uses, and challenged the government's claims of a housing-driven urban regeneration. Moreover, STMBC also noted the procedural difficulties,¹⁶⁷ both politically and inter-departmentally,¹⁶⁸ as further reasons for not pursuing changes in employment sites. Therefore this appears to fit the Constrained Model of *uc* through the acceptance that, where there might be urban under-use, it was probably more sustainable in the long term to maintain the existing designation.

In 2003, STMBC appeared to have moved position on economic development sites. The need for a prestige strategic economic site in the area, as advocated by *RPG1:2000*¹⁶⁹ was noted, but STMBC demonstrated an awareness of changing business requirements which they thought might shake out the less attractive economic development sites. These could then be factored into the next study (*ucs*). They highlighted *PPG3:2000*'s requirement of re-investigating designated employment sites to assess their housing suitability (*PPG3:2000* par.42), and STMBC had also made money available for consultants to look at the industrial stock to assess its long term future in the context of the Tyne and Wear sub-region, and the wider region as a whole. Furthermore, practitioners felt that councillors appeared more willing to consider changing employment designations. Moreover, practitioners noted that housing developers were showing interest in developing housing on some of the designated employment sites, even in some cases where there was considerable remediation required. This suggests considerable movement of the part of STMBC towards this research's Opportunity Model.

¹⁶⁶ 'It doesn't seem to me that you can keep people on their own threshold if you fail to provide employment opportunities for them and the drain to the South East is a very real one and we can certainly trace it in terms of our population decline' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁶⁷ 'I would see some things [difficulties/issues] when you're going to have to come to a view about what takes precedence if, even having it [the designation] in the plan, economically the creation of jobs [comes] over environment –we'd hardly allocate that economic development site for housing, because if jobs come first then someone has to re-plan' (FP: workshop 03/01 tape 1). This effectively argues that employment would take precedence over housing on employment sites, even if these sites had been looked at for housing development-opportunity in an *ucs*.

¹⁶⁸ '... think the crunch here is going to be on the choices between economic development sites and housing... I know that we've got sites that are laying fallow for a long time but you try to screw them out of ED [Economic Development] and you're in for a high day.... because *politically* you know we can't turn round and say, well, yeah, we'll strike out 2000 or 200 more or less South Tyneside jobs, it's just not going to happen' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

¹⁶⁹ Sunderland, Gateshead South Tyneside area, North of Sunderland advocated by *RPG1:2000*.

However, concerns were still voiced over the sustainability of the patterns of development this course of action created.¹⁷⁰ These concerns noted that rather than reducing land-take, the development pressure on the fringe had changed so that the pressure was increasingly coming from industry (see footnote 170). The high-density housing around Metro stations and bus stops was also questioned, as it severed the communities' work/home connection, with its incumbent problems (rehearsed above).

For STMBC, sustainability still focused on the integration of neighbourhoods and life-work environments. However, their view on the plausibility of changing employment site designations had changed, demonstrating a shift in their thinking on *uc* towards this research's Opportunity Model, tempered by constraint.

Additionally, in the period 1998-2001, still in relation to sustainability, STMBC emphasised the need for balancing demands to ensure the ongoing viability and liveability of localities. Reflecting on mixed use they noted its importance, but also the difficulty of meeting contradictory needs in ways that were acceptable to all,¹⁷¹ and the need for some space (urban under-use) to achieve it positively for all concerned. This suggests that balancing uses, whilst necessary and beneficial, constrains development.

Secondly, STMBC reflected on the financial viability of some of the more difficult remediation sites due to the site complications themselves, the increased production time and the relatively low return.¹⁷² Here they questioned the sustainability of encouraging non-viable options to develop, given that they might not be financially viable as housing sites, and the length of time it would take to produce housing from these sites- effectively challenging the sustainability claims in terms of their financial viability.

Therefore STMBC did not accept as a given that the most sustainable option for further housing was necessarily to privilege housing use over other uses. Nor did they accept that the most sustainable option was to consider housing on previously-developed-land without regard for its wider implications; and they argued their case on the grounds that such development produced questionable patterns of use, behaviour, development, and built

¹⁷⁰ 'Pushing all the housing to be developed on previously-developed-land, whilst allowing industry to go out on the outskirts' (DW: interview 03/03).

¹⁷¹ 'The biggie would be the split between jobs and houses. And the difficulty we have here in South Tyneside again is the type of industry very often isn't a good neighbour ...shipyards are a classic case... you try to [provide adequate] ... distance to meet sound considerations, give people a decent job, and not constrain the shipyards to the extent that they say "thank you very much, we're going somewhere else". So I think again it comes to this "balance"' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

¹⁷² 'By their very nature the high yield areas [are] the hardest to bring on stream...because of the complex investment patterns, land ownership patterns I suppose' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

form (all discussed elsewhere). Instead they saw the issue of sustainability¹⁷³ revolving around the balancing of claims and the integration of policy objectives and land uses. This was further borne out by their emphasis on balance in other issues already discussed: the balancing between housing types and tenures, and between housing demand and housing supply (see section 9.5.3).

In 2003 STMBC noted the unexpected developer interest in difficult remediation sites, made commercially viable through proposals of very high densities. They also noted that in some locations the demand for housing options was higher than for economic development;¹⁷⁴ However, the market viability of these options remained untested,¹⁷⁵ and STMBC anticipated potential funding difficulties in some instances.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, sites with developer attraction did not necessarily equate to them being sustainable, even if they were remediation sites. Here STMBC challenged the liveability of such dense housing, its affordability, its ability to deliver sustainable living patterns and sustainable travel patterns. Consequently, although the market interest in such sites helped STMBC modify their constrained view of their urban area, they still questioned these schemes' viability in terms of long-term sustainability objectives, such as continuing commercial viability and the quality of life these developments would offer future occupants.

STMBC also linked the balance aspect of sustainability to *uc* through their argumentation of the urban-rural balance, emphasising the greater sustainability of both the villages and the urban area if housing was accommodated in the villages (already discussed). Here they anticipated the use of their proposed study on the green belt's functionality as a (counter-) balance to the *ucs* which linked housing opportunities to the urban areas,¹⁷⁷ to ensure that a full borough-wide picture was portrayed rather than allowing the focus of housing requirement to become essentially urban. Effectively, this study would have emphasised the option of green belt development around the villages and its possible contribution to the overall housing requirement.

¹⁷³ They also were interested in the issue of housing affordability in terms of energy efficient housing, rather than simply the purchase price or rental cost, again taking a longer term view on the issue of sustainability and affordability, rather than the snapshot one-off event.

¹⁷⁴ 'There are a lot of sites coming forward ...now where the market is showing pressure for housing, not for economic recycling' (KB: interview 03/03).

¹⁷⁵ DW noted that proposals had come forward but the schemes had not been produced yet (DW: interview 03/03).

¹⁷⁶ KB noted the difficulty for developers to find gap funding on these difficult sites to help in developing them and to defray risk (KB: interview 03/03).

¹⁷⁷ 'At the time [1998] we basically felt that some work on the urban area had been done under the original planning guidance work, the [North East Arup Study]... and this was trying to get at the other side of the coin.' (DW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

Again this argument emphasises balance, claiming as it did that it provided a fuller, more balanced picture of STMB's ability to accommodate additional housing, rather than over-emphasising urban areas at the expense of both villages and urban areas (see section 9.5.4). This argument too challenges the urban emphasis of housing location contained in the understanding of *uc*, and by so doing supports an understanding of *uc* closer to this research's Constrained Model.

By 2003, STMBC had reduced this link between town-cramming of the urban and the under-use of the villages, and now argue the development of the urban area and the village under-use (see section 9.5.4). Now they argued each case separately -on its own merits- but in both cases supported on sustainability grounds. Although now independent of each other, these issues were still occasionally connected, but now this connection emphasised urban area development to alleviate the pressure felt on the villages and green belt,¹⁷⁸ and was supported through the *ucs* findings.

Here the *ucs* was seen to have been essential in re-forming STMBC's practitioners' view of the urban area, demonstrating as it did the ability of STMB's urban area to accommodate sufficient amounts of housing to meet regional requirements.¹⁷⁹ It should be noted here that the regional context had also changed, and that STMB was now expected to provide 150 units/year rather than 3,000 units over a planned period. Urban area housing was now presented as sustainable on a number of grounds: firstly, the reuse of previously-developed-land; secondly, the proximity of urban housing to urban services and facilities; and thirdly, the proximity of transport services for the respective urban areas.

Moreover, it was argued that balanced sustainability¹⁸⁰ could be achieved through designs that sensitively reflected local design characteristics to mitigate the impact of high densities. It was also argued that there was a need to restructure the built stock to maintain its viability. Finally, the prevention of green belt erosion was now argued for, also in terms of balanced sustainability. This then suggests that balanced sustainability, as part of STMBC's understanding of *uc*, had moved towards the Opportunity Model.

¹⁷⁸ 'The decision was taken early on to exclude the green belt from the study so therefore this study doesn't impact directly upon those villages, except of course, well it does because on the reverse side of the coin it does take pressure off those places for development.' (JW: interview 04/03).

¹⁷⁹ STMBC's *ucs* suggested that there was enough opportunity to provide a supply of housing sites in the urban area for the next 12 years, beyond which they felt it would be unwise to consider.

¹⁸⁰ 'Just thought that it was important to have a balanced approach to say ... "well we are not just about producing a document that shows how much brownfield land is available in the local authority", but I think you have to give quite a lot of thought to the environmental consequences of identifying those sites.' (JW: interview 04/03).

Therefore, STMBC's overall position has changed. Now its consideration of sustainability with regard to balance and integration is cautiously more positive about urban area development. Its consideration of housing requirement and development, in relation to the demands these make on the chosen localities and the problems of under-use that housing might help to alleviate, has also helped to construct a more positive conceptualisation of *uc*, allowing more development in the main urban area, and moving towards a closer alignment with this research's Opportunity Model of *uc*.

9.5.6 *The Perceived Need for Green Belt Incursions*

In 1998, the most contentious issue for STMBC centred on the different practitioners' views of the green belt, although STMBC had a clear policy on green belt, outlined in the *UDP* and defended at public inquiry.¹⁸¹ Amongst the practitioners at the workshop the general consensus,¹⁸² with some dissenting minority voices, was that the green belt was the likely location for future housing due to the difficulty of developing in the urban areas¹⁸³ (outlined already).

Initially, the need to review the green belt boundaries was raised in the consultation draft of the *UDP* in 1992 (*Consultation UDP* p.69) and these changes were raised as an issue at the *UDP* inquiry. Therefore STMBC began to argue this issue again. The green belt itself was challenged in a number of ways. Within the *UDP* itself the validity of the green belt and its importance stood firm and the changes expressed were aimed at protecting the green belt (*Adopted UDP* p.109). However at the 2001 workshop, the validity of green belts themselves was questioned¹⁸⁴ and the validity of this particular green belt was queried through challenging its designation.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ See *Adopted UDP* p.109, quoted in South Tyneside Brownfield Study (1999) par. 1.3 no page number 'As the council is unwilling to encroach onto the Green Belt to fulfil its housing requirements ...' (as was seen in the way they defended policy Env 25 at the *UDP* inquiry);

'We were very much concerned about the loss of green belt in the next generation of plans... and were trying to define, or seeking a methodology by which we could walk into the inquiry on the *UDP* and justify to an inspector what invasion into green belt we made and why.' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁸² 'Everybody in the department, I mean everybody I have spoken to in the department, sort of everybody, I mean a lot of people in the department... seem to think that "yes it is only a matter of time, you know this is going to happen. There's going to be a loss of green belt land".' (JW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁸³ 'In the sense that we knew, and still know, and I'm very confident that we will not be able to achieve 3,000 dwellings' worth of land within the currently built up area.' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁸⁴ 'So why on earth do we have this designation in the *UDP* that says green belt – sacrosanct? Yes we need the open space and yes we need this sort of place to recreate but what we got is ...'[interrupted and stops]. (CA: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁸⁵ 'Don't you find it rather artificial as green belt in South Tyneside- I mean in the middle of a DETR conurbation ... I mean South Tyneside grew out of ... 4 or 5 towns which used to be separate individual towns and are no longer really identifiable on the ground ... I mean the whole idea of the green belt in South Tyneside just hasn't been disputed before, I mean yes it has been provided for in the plan...' [interrupted and stops]. (CA: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

In addition to this, the green belt was challenged on its functionality in terms of its ability to achieve the green belt designated objectives (*PPG2:1995*) as well as on its ability to be an environmental and social resource -an issue the functional capacity of the green belt study was supposed to address-¹⁸⁶ and at the workshop the green belt's narrowness and quality as 'green belt' was raised.¹⁸⁷

Added to these direct challenges on the green belt there were further challenges through indirect routes including the challenge of the viability of the outlying villages (see section 9.5.4). Here the claim that these villages needed more housing transposed into an argument of 'village rounding' (i.e. village enlargement) which given their surrounding green belt amounted to green belt incursion.¹⁸⁸ Another indirect challenge was that, as a constrained borough, STMBC had unique difficulties in finding land for additional housing.¹⁸⁹

Besides these material challenges, a number of linguistic challenges were made. One of these challenges was effectively the downgrading of the green belt from green belt to 'rurban',¹⁹⁰ with its emphasis on the fact that it was not rural land that was being discussed but rather land that was already quite urban, and therefore contestable.

Another of these challenges occurred over changes to boundary classifications. In some instances the boundary change was advocated but the emphasis was placed on the loss of green belt land 'green belt incursions'. In other instances STMBC emphasised the positive aspects for such changes in relation to the village viability arguments. Here they used phrases like 'village extensions' or 'village rounding' (meeting 03/00). However, whilst these linguistic challenges downgraded the 'green belt' privileging-by-definition, they were not used consistently, with practitioners sometimes referring to 'rurban villages' (see footnote 190), and sometimes to 'green belt villages' still in the context of village

¹⁸⁶ *Functional Capacity of the Green Belt: Briefing Note.*

¹⁸⁷ 'We haven't really got that wide a green belt, in places it's only about a half a kilometre wide....and I am surprised the housebuilders didn't come up with this at the last inquiry. [It's] all very well saying you're not going into the green belt for housing, but is this green belt really worth the name that it's got?' (DW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁸⁸ 'The only way we are going to do that [promote development in the villages to make them viable] in at least some of those villages is actually to go into greenfield sites not brownfield sites' i.e. effectively into green belt (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁸⁹ 'We just *don't* have any land, open land, that isn't green belt' (CA: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

¹⁹⁰ KB: 'But I think that with the stuff that we've touched on this morning- which is this argument between green belt protection and *rurban* village viability' PD: 'We got down to rurban now!' [general laughter] (workshop 03/01 tape 2).

extension,¹⁹¹ and on some occasions reflecting on 'green belt incursions' as possibly being positive (see footnote 190) and sometimes relating to them positively as 'village extensions' or 'village rounding' (03/00 minutes of meeting). Therefore, although there was a downplaying of the green belt and its designation by changing key descriptive terms, this was not fixed, nor was it universal (see footnote 190). Nevertheless, all the alternative terminology effectively reduced the claims of the green belt protection argument, rather than strengthening it.

This contention against the green belt was itself challenged, firstly on the strength of its argument.¹⁹² The strength of this green belt incursion claim was challenged by a suggestion that there was an equally strong green belt protection claim. This counterclaim emphasised the need for parity between the two cases until more information had been gathered,¹⁹³ and the need to assess STMB's *uc*, emphasising the probability that its findings were likely to support the maintenance of green belt designations rather than its incursion. The emphasis was on the evidence being gathered with the likely intention of justifying the maintenance of the green belt designation rather than its alteration, and the possibility that the urban area still had sufficient capacity to accommodate the required additional housing. However, many in STMBC were of the view that the collecting of the evidence would prove the need for incursions into the green belt, due to the intensity of existing urban development.

Secondly, the green belt incursion argument was challenged on environmental grounds,¹⁹⁴ but this was refuted through the claim that the outlying villages' need for development and through questioning the impact of further development in urban areas.¹⁹⁵ Here the contention was the likelihood of negative impact on both the villages and the built-up area

¹⁹¹ '...long-term retention of green belt villages with some enhancement and expansions' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

¹⁹² 'I think there is a very strong case to be managed with defending the green belt' (JW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁹³ 'I mean this goes back to why this [functional capacity of the green belt study] was trying to look from the other end up.... You cannot say we will defend it [the green belt] at all costs and you cannot say we will definitely go into it at this stage until we've looked at all the possibilities' (DW: workshop 03/01 tape 1). Here KB interjected 'but it is an option' at the point where DW raised the position that they 'would definitely go into the green belt', effectively seeming to assert the preferred option.

¹⁹⁴ 'I mean with your environmental hat on, I mean, how do you feel about incursions into the green belt?' (JW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁹⁵ 'It's all too easy J to talk about the environmental impact of going into the green belt. What about the sustainability: economic, social issues that surround supporting those villages? What's the cost benefit analysis of going into the green belt- the environmental impact is very obvious to most of us. What's the environmental, social, economic impact of planning development into the existing built up areas?' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

if development in the green belt was not allowed, suggesting a strong argument for future development in the green belt.

Therefore, STMBC's construction of *uc* around 2001 (see *Figure 9.5*) was even more constrained than this research's Constrained Model, as STMBC were effectively presenting the case that their urban areas were already so constrained, i.e. *uc* as a finite amount had been reached,¹⁹⁶ that green belt designations would have to be changed. The assumption was that an *ucs* would bear this out,¹⁹⁷ and the argument was further augmented through claims that further development would enhance and sustain ailing villages.

By 2003 this position had changed,¹⁹⁸ and the threat to the green belt abated, although the change in thinking was not thought to be unanimous:¹⁹⁹

our perception has changed, we were thinking it was possibly a case of how much we would have to go into the green belt, but now it seems, at least in the short or medium term, that we don't discuss that any more

DW: interview 03/03

Now, the green belt's benefits to STMB as a whole were strongly espoused by some,²⁰⁰ and the need to refute this claim appeared to have receded. This said, it was recognised that there was a 'political dimension to this'.²⁰¹ Nevertheless in 2003, STMBC found itself in a position where green belt incursion was a matter of choice, to be argued on the grounds of village viability, rather than a matter of necessity forced upon it by national and regional housing requirements.

This shift in emphasis came about because of many of the changes listed above. Firstly, there was the change in emphasis at the regional level, with its acceptance of relatively low housing allocations for STMB, with its shift from the large target number of 3,000

¹⁹⁶ 'In recent years there has been a growing belief that the borough is approaching its Environmental Capacity for new development. The general nature of South Tyneside is that it is already highly urbanised' (South Tyneside Brownfield Study:1999 par 1.4 no page number).

¹⁹⁷ 'I think regardless of [the *PPG3:2000* requirement to produce an *ucs*] we're [STMBC] probably coming to the view that especially if we were going to be looking at possible green belt incursions ... we are going to have to do it [complete an *ucs*] to justify that to show that we've looked at it' (DW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

¹⁹⁸ 'The attitude [within the authority] towards the green belt in my opinion has altered in the last 18 months' (JW: interview 04/03).

¹⁹⁹ '[The protection of the green belt was] a big issue for [the planner] personally but thought that this might be at variance with how other people [in the authority] might see it' (JW: interview 04/03).

²⁰⁰ 'I personally feel that given the special characteristics of South Tyneside [the protection of the green belt] is a very important issue' (JW: interview 04/03).

²⁰¹ 'Not everyone in the world was happy [that the *ucs* demonstrated] enough land to take the pressure off the green belt' (JW: interview 04/03).

dwelling units to the annualised rate of 150 dwelling units/yr, and with its change in demolition policy, accepting a net loss. Secondly, perhaps as a response to this relaxation on demolition replacement, STMBC increased their demolitions, which helped restructure the housing supply. It was thought this would help to make urban areas more habitable and more popular with householders over time. Thirdly, events in STMB appeared to demonstrate developers' willingness to develop difficult housing sites and, at least in the shorter term, windfalls would continue to come forward, relieving the pressure on other sites. All of this convinced STMBC that the need to develop in the green belt was no longer necessary.

In addition to these contextual changes, the *ucs* was also cited as providing convincing evidence of adequate development opportunity in the urban areas and that there was no need for green belt incursions. However some practitioners noted that this was the immediate position, but that other needs, notably the ongoing viability of the outlying villages might alter the situation. This, however, was a case that would have to be fought and won on grounds of sustainability, and the necessary evidence to prove an 'exceptions case' remained uncertain, with the green belt designation taking primacy over any considerations of further village rounding.

Therefore, in 2003 STMBC apparently accepted that the ability to accommodate housing in the urban area had been previously under-estimated and that the need for green belt incursions had receded. This demonstrates a distinct move away from their earlier position of village under-use and town-cramming to one of urban under-use and village under-use, with urban under-use absorbing most of the required additional housing, and the concern about village viability falling somewhat into abeyance.²⁰²

Taking all of the elements of STMBC's argument as it related to their understanding of *uc* and their own *uc*, STMBC's construction of *uc* in argumentation terms appears to have moved from a very constrained position, more constrained even than this research's concept-models, to a concept which falls somewhere between this research's Constrained and Opportunity Models, still perhaps falling closer to the Constrained Model. So STMBC's understanding of *uc* as a concept has moved in the same direction as government's, but STMBC still question some of the government's thinking on particular issues, resulting in a more constrained *uc* concept than government's appears to be.

²⁰² Demonstrated by the lack of discussion within the department noted by DW over the need for incursions into the green belt, and by JW over the issue of village viability.

9.6 The Use of Urban Capacity Studies

The argumentation presented above shows how STMBC used *ucs* to substantiate their case, demonstrating that they had given the issues of housing, *uc*, and green belt infringement sufficient thought. The primary debate where this representation was seen to be necessary was the determination of the distribution of housing requirement amongst the different local authorities by the regional organisation. The other arena was the *UDP* EIP.

At the national level during this time, 1998-2001, the North (in contrast to the South) was often characterised as having ample brownfield land with no constraining issues, that could easily accommodate high proportions of additional housing.²⁰³ Urban and metropolitan authorities (in contrast to rural/shire authorities) were depicted as being the better places to accommodate future housing (see chapter 2). Therefore, as both a Northern and a metropolitan authority -with a belief that they were very constrained- STMBC needed to demonstrate that firstly they had given the issues sufficient consideration, and that secondly they were not a typical Northern metropolitan authority which fell into the characterisations being imposed from elsewhere. The construction of *uc* presented through the *ucs* assessments were seen as essential evidence in stating the case of constraint (i.e. the Constrained Model of *uc*)

At the regional level, the North East Arup Study (1998)²⁰⁴ was used to support a regional strategic prioritisation of the urban areas, and the metropolitan area in particular, to meet the region's need for previously-developed-land for their future housing requirement. In this context STMBC's locally-generated South Tyneside Brownfield Study (1999) was used to demonstrate the borough's limited ability to accommodate additional housing in its urban areas. It was also used to support STMBC's claims that they could not be expected to accommodate increased amounts of additional housing to relieve pressure elsewhere, either regionally or nationally. Indeed, they argued that STMB needed to be relieved of some of their existing allocation of housing rather than being imposed upon further. This

²⁰³ At this time there was a discussion about what the national 60% brownfield housing development target meant: whether it related to the national level (in which case higher proportions of brownfield development in the North could rectify lower proportions in the South, when the totals were averaged out); the regional level (in which case higher proportions of brownfield development in metropolitan areas would allow more rural authorities to produce lower proportions); or the local level (in which case it was thought urban authorities would find it easier to achieve the target than rural ones).

If it was taken that the national target related to national level or the regional level, then this put pressure on Northern and/or urban/metropolitan authorities to increase their brownfield housing yield, or if, as in the case of STMB, this was already high (1998: 94%, taken from South Tyneside Brownfield Study *figure 1.1* no page number) to maintain it.

²⁰⁴ Carried out at the regional level.

position characterised both STMB and *uc* as constrained with an emphasis on the finite capacity of the borough to accommodate future housing.

To this end, STMBC used the very fact that they had completed a brownfield study at all as evidence of their mounting concern over the expectations anticipated as likely to be placed upon them by the region.²⁰⁵

They also used the existence of the South Tyneside Brownfield Study as evidence that they had considered the issue, and were making their constraint claims on the basis of some investigation, not simply asserting them without grounds; and finally they used this study's findings (actual figures) to demonstrate their limited ability to accommodate additional housing on brownfield land. The South Tyneside Brownfield Study itself argued and presented STMBC as having:

an almost unique problem in meeting this [housing] requirement in that [South Tyneside] has almost no greenfield sites that are not within the green belt

South Tyneside Brownfield Study (1999), par 1.3 no page number

Its results supported this claim, finding housing for just over 1060 dwellings if all the sites were developed at 50 dw/ha: about a third of the lowest -and eventually arrived at- regional requirement of STMBC. Effectively then, the South Tyneside Brownfield Study reinforced STMBC's position of constraint, firstly to themselves, convincing practitioners within the authority of their own compactness and inability to take in more, and secondly, to the region, encouraging them to locate housing elsewhere in the region, rather than in STMBC, and even to reduce the initial requirement. In the event the region did accept a lower housing requirement from STMBC, for a number of reasons,²⁰⁶ but the South Tyneside Brownfield Study was thought to have helped.

The *UDP* inquiry was the second arena where *uc* and *ucs* played a role. Prior to the event it was thought that these studies would play an important role in supporting the *UDP*

²⁰⁵ '... if we were going to be looking at possible green belt incursions...we're going to have to do it [an *ucs*] to justify that- to show we've looked at it [*uc*]. ...it seems to me no coincidence that we've been looking at this for some time, and one of the other authorities that's way down the line is Middlesbrough. If you look at the 1991 census results which are the densest population districts in the region? Middlesbrough one, South Tyneside two' (DW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²⁰⁶ Here it should be noted that the most influential factor in the regional organisation reducing STMBC's housing requirement was not the South Tyneside Brownfield Study, but rather Newcastle City Council's desire to increase their allocations to achieve their *Going For Growth* strategy objectives. This effectively provided the region with an alternative urban location to accommodate the surplus created by reducing STMBC's allocation (see *Housing in the North East A Framework for Action: 2000* p.16).

policies, particularly housing and the green belt.²⁰⁷ Therefore it was anticipated that these studies would be scrutinised more fully than they were in the event. Here again the studies were seen as a necessary counterbalance to the regional position. The intended functionality of the green belt study (not an urban capacity study) was seen as a likely counterbalance to the North East Arup Study's emphasis on the urban area (see section 9.6), whilst the South Tyneside Brownfield Study demonstrated the constrained nature of the urban area, already discussed above. Here again the emphasis of the study findings and the use of the study itself was on proving constraint (the Constrained Model).

Again, the primary use of these studies was to demonstrate that disputable issues had been considered adequately, and to provide 'transparent' evidence supporting the argued policy positions in a potentially contentious arena. Again the studies helped demonstrate that STMB's urban area was constrained, limiting the amount of housing it could accommodate and threatening the designated green belt- argued from the findings, and the anticipated findings, of the studies. Rather to STMBC's surprise this position was more easily won than the STMBC practitioners had anticipated.²⁰⁸

STMBC's voluntary completion of the South Tyneside Brownfield Study to address particular issues, discussed above, helped STMBC to express, through the act of completion -due to the resource cost of time, effort and personnel incurred- that their concerns were genuine and strongly felt.

Taken together, in both instances the discussion with the region and the *UDP* inquiry the purpose of the study was to demonstrate constrained *uc*, and was used in a number of ways to present this case. This, perhaps more than anything else, helps to establish that STMBC had a constrained view of themselves and understood *uc* in these terms and *ucs* findings as evidence to demonstrate that point.

In contrast, although STMBC's initial interest in completing an *ucs* i.e. the *South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft)* had been voluntary, voiced before the government requirement of *PPG3:2000*, the impact of this voluntary impetus was absorbed through government's making the completion of an *ucs* a requirement. Therefore, the *ucs*

²⁰⁷ 'We were very much concerned about the loss of green belt in the next generation of plans... and were trying to define, or seeking a methodology by which we could walk into the inquiry on the *UDP* and justify to an inspector what invasion into green belt we made and why.' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²⁰⁸ 'But we even resisted that [green belt infringement/erosion through individual site permissions] with the last *UDP*. We did fight the field, but we really didn't have real housebuilders among them, so that in the end the arguments fell by the wayside, didn't they? But I think it's highly questionable (that) some of the sites are actually won through the *UDP* process in terms of retaining the green belt (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

discussed at the workshop in 03/01 was seen as more of a government requirement.²⁰⁹ This requirement was accepted, but its purpose²¹⁰ and its methods²¹¹ were questioned, and the level of detail was thought to be a resource issue,²¹² although they aimed to be 'transparent' and 'thorough'. Given that STMBC had previously thought it important to consider *uc*, this questioning of the purpose of the *ucs* may be indicative of the change in the construction of the concept by government, and the consideration of how STMBC were going to accommodate these changes in respect to their locality and situation.

Therefore, the government requirement for authorities to complete an *ucs* was sufficient justification for completing it.²¹³ Moreover in 2001, in response to its purpose, some of the practitioners thought the *ucs* could be used to further support STMBC's *UDP*, and to continue to present to regional government the notion of the borough as constrained, and the concerns this created over housing numbers and green belt incursions.²¹⁴ However, others at this time saw the purpose of the *ucs* as proving the opposite case if it could be done, through demonstrating the availability of sufficient opportunity within the urban area to absorb the housing requirement without having to encroach into the green belt. Here the purposes of the different practitioners appear to demonstrate the change in thinking that was occurring, with some believing that *uc* was still primarily about the detrimental impact on the urban area (closer to the Constrained Model) and others believing it was about accommodating additional housing in urban areas (moving towards the Opportunity Model).

The *ucs* was never seen as a place where policy could be explored. It was accepted that different densities would be used, linked to new government guidance, and that sites designated for other uses would be included initially, even if they were discounted later on. However, the notion of exploring pro-actively policies, or initiatives aimed at increasing the housing amount (e.g. car-free housing suggested in London SRQ Study: Annex 1) were discarded as it was thought such changes, with so many variables and unknown quantities,

²⁰⁹ 'I think the sea change is really *PPG3[:2000]* and the requirement. Basically, I don't think we do have a choice not to do an urban capacity study'. (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²¹⁰ 'So as I say, what really does intrigue me is what we're going to do with it [the urban capacity study] when we have done it.' (CA: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²¹¹ 'It's how we do it and how *well* we do it [that] I think we're more concerned about' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²¹² 'Well the other teams haven't got time to be involved in this sort of detail so, really it comes down to [the] policy team, doesn't it?' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

²¹³ 'It's a requirement and therefore because we are South Tyneside we will follow the law and do it if nothing else' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²¹⁴ 'I'm very confident that we will not be able to achieve 3,000 dwellings' worth of land within the currently built up area. I think we may come a lot closer than we first expected' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

would render the results meaningless.²¹⁵ This in turn would weaken their ability to use the findings as supporting evidence for policy in the context of antagonistic challenges, primarily from housebuilders.

Instead the *ucs* was seen as a way, firstly, of finding would-be development-opportunities; secondly, of exploring the impact of increased densities applied in accordance with the local area's character; and thirdly, of presenting the different site constraints of particular sites which limited or prevented development. In this respect the *ucs* was seen as a support document to the existing *UDP*; not a document that sought to challenge the policy assumptions and policy of the *UDP*. In this it followed the Constrained Model of *uc*.

By 2003, although one or two practitioners still questioned the value of an *ucs*, most practitioners within STMBC accepted that it was a government requirement in relation to housing policy, replacing the land-availability study, which provided adequate justification for doing it²¹⁶ and there was a general feeling that other uses for it had been found as well (see below).

As already mentioned, for one practitioner the emphasis of completing the *ucs* was to find adequate land for housing development within the urban area; this was driven by a private concern to protect the green belt, and he thought that the *ucs* was the vehicle that could prove the case.²¹⁷ He felt that this had been achieved and that STMBC's thinking had altered, a view endorsed by others.²¹⁸ This places *uc* and *ucs* firmly into the context of planning for housing policy and land use planning, but suggests a shift away from STMBC's earlier expectation that the *ucs* would prove their inability to accommodate additional housing to actually proving the opposite case. Therefore the *ucs* highlighted their need to change their thinking on the level of constraint of the urban areas, and indeed their thinking does appear to have changed.

Other practitioners felt that *uc* and *ucs* had become increasingly orientated towards housing and preoccupied with numbers, making housing an independent entity divorced from other uses, and that they had had to accommodate that. This, they thought, contrasted with their

²¹⁵ 'We've got to be *incredibly* lucky to be anywhere *near* our predicted target. There's just so many variables' (CA workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²¹⁶ There is one big issue for me personally, well it is an issue for the authority as a whole but the way I see ... the green belt, may be at variance with how other people see it, so I am speaking personally. (JW: interview 04/03).

²¹⁷ 'My personal opinion is that we should use this study as evidence to demonstrate that we don't need to encroach onto the green belt' (JW: interview 04/03).

²¹⁸ 'Our perception has changed; we were thinking it was possible a case of how much we would have to go into the greenbelt ...now it seems, at least in the short or medium term, that we don't discuss that any more' (DW: interview 03/03).

earlier *uc* thinking, with more focus on the environmental and social impact²¹⁹ of forcing additional housing into constrained centres, and they wondered if the approach would ultimately begin to challenge locally sensitive policy to the detriment of STMBC.

In airing these concerns housing needs and preferences were raised, as well as the new concerns of 'at risk' housing (driven by the CURS Report and RPG1), and the need for a greater spatiality reflected in developing more integrated policies, which included initiatives to reflect on the social constraints²²⁰ as well as the more obvious development constraints, land assembly etc., usually reflected upon within *ucs*. These would appear to relate to the government's link between urban regeneration and *uc*, with its emphasis on making effective use of latent housing opportunity through urban renaissance. This would appear to be a logical extension to the *uc* idea (also made by Cameron and Gunn:2003 forthcoming). However, the practitioner did not go so far as to suggest how these might be incorporated into an *ucs* and the current *ucs* does not explore these considerations. The way that it did so would ultimately affect whether their inclusion constrained *uc* or increased it.²²¹

The general practitioner view was that the *ucs* was effectively about finding sufficient land for housing, taking over from the previous availability study. One practitioner felt that this was at the expense of the consideration of sustainability, noting that the government guidance was quite weak in its advice on this issue. Another practitioner, also expressing this housing emphasis, noted that now there was beginning to be a need for an industrial land study, with the emphasis on identifying appropriate sites for industrial development as well – re-addressing the balance. However within this thinking STMBC are also about to look at their industrial sites to see, amongst other things, which could be re-designated, primarily for housing.

However, the South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultaton Draft) was seen primarily as a support document to policy. Currently this equates to supporting the existing *Adopted UDP*, but soon the *ucs* is likely to support policy in the future *Local Development Framework*. It has also been seen as a supporting document that they can continue to use to support STMBC's position on housing policy to regional government. The way this is done will influence whether it is constraining or not.

²¹⁹ Here the social emphasis has been shown to be related to the adequate provision of services and facilities for local populations.

²²⁰ These relate to crime, health, education, neighbourliness, locality stigmatisation, social exclusion etc.

²²¹ The social constraints to *uc*, and how these could be included effectively into *uc* thinking and assessment, would be an interesting area for further research.

The document has also been used and can be used in other ways, by other parties. One practitioner noted that the *ucs* helped in the selling off of council land for capital receipts (not strictly a planning function). Another practitioner noted that the survey element was increasingly being used as a reference point for other development besides housing and that, recently, regional government had suggested he looked at the *ucs* sites to find a possible windfarm site.

It was recognised that the *ucs* was a snapshot of a fixed moment in time, and had built-in obsolescence due to the production time for an *ucs* being out of step with the dynamics of the land market. Consequently, the *ucs* does not tell everything, and it needs periodic revision to update the information, revising the available sites, and re-assessing earlier *ucs* assumptions. The revision exercise, it was thought, could also work into their housing market monitoring processes and/or their policy production. Consequently the *ucs* has become something of a monitoring tool, facilitating development-opportunity; this purpose lies closer to the Opportunity Model.

In the period 1998-2001, the primary purpose of an *ucs* for STMBC was to support an argument of constraint, based on existing knowledge, and through the application of existing policy; this use would fit this research's Constrained Model of *uc*. By 2003, the primary purpose had not changed, as the document was still used to support existing housing policy, but more work had been done on finding appropriate sites. There was also a greater recognition that its policy might change, that sites would be used and importantly that new ones were likely to emerge, and that these changes, where they were not reflected in the existing *ucs*, would need to be in future ones. However, there has consistently been a view that *ucs* are primarily about auditing, and the exploration of policy changes occurs elsewhere (in another document). This suggest that STMBC have made a move in their understanding of *uc* in line with the government's but that STMBC may not have moved as far along this trajectory, perhaps for very good reasons.

9.7 The Study Methods

9.7.1 The South Tyneside Brownfield Study

The South Tyneside Brownfield Study was said to be a quick initial study (KB: 09/02 meeting minutes), aimed at reviewing the housing development-opportunity of known brownfield sites in response to government's target of 60% new housing on previously-developed-land, and the pressure STMBC was feeling from the region's need to accommodate higher proportions of housing. The study has been explored more fully in

section 7.7.2 as Scenario 5. The chosen methods were based on STMBC's knowledge at the time, the need for relatively quick results to support claims being made concurrent with its production, and the resources available to them.

The study used existing data on known 'brownfield' sites. These sites included educational, religious, office and industrial premises, informal open space and vacant units. Housing sites were not included due to the low vacancy rates, the existing density and the shortage of public open space. As a brownfield survey the findings were limited to STMBC housing development opportunity on previously-developed-land rather than *uc per se*. Therefore it was a partial *ucs*, not a full one. The survey was also limited initially by using known data. In completing the 2003 *uc* the same data source was found to be dated and inaccurate, limiting the development-opportunities. The sites were viewed to ascertain whether the property was occupied, vacant, or likely to become vacant. This viewing, whilst realistic, is also reductive. Therefore the survey method and source content was limited in a number of ways which was likely to have a constraining effect on the findings.

The study applied a range of blanket densities, not particularly related to local policy or site characteristics, but drawn from their own average densities (25 dw/ha), and higher densities (40-50 dw/ha) mentioned by other organisations,²²² although these needed to be justified. Reflecting on their average density, STMBC felt that this demonstrated the real situation, as the likelihood was that average density would continue to prevail.

The study reflected on existing policy and physical constraints to demonstrate where there were likely to be difficulties in development. Unsurprisingly, given that *UDP* policy is designed to be adhered to and the *UDP* policy was currently being adopted, there was an emphasis on maintaining existing policy, effectively preventing the exploration of other policy alternatives. Here the purpose of the study as a support document to existing policy effectively restricted its exploratory ability.

The study method and content were both highly constrained, and the study's findings demonstrated that about a third of STMBC's regional housing target could be accommodated in such sites (at the higher densities). So the study demonstrated the constrained position STMBC felt they were in, proving their claim of constraint to themselves, and reiterated it for the purposes of future policy, and for discussions with the regional authority.

²²² The other organisations were JRF's commissioned report from Llewelyn-Davies and SAUS (1994) and UWE/LGMB report authored by Barton (Barton:1995).

9.7.2 *South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft)*

The practitioners at the workshop (03/01) expected the reasons they chose to do an *ucs* would influence the methods they chose, and they anticipated this would create built-in biases.²²³

At the workshop (in 2001) discussing the methods and content of the South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft), the study boundary was the most contentious issue, which linked into the green belt protection or incursion arguments (see section 9.5.6). At this workshop one practitioner, noting the need to define the search area and the likely controversy his suggestion might bring, suggested that the search area excluded the green belt.²²⁴ This suggestion emphasised green belt protection, by putting the green belt beyond the *ucs*'s consideration, a position which the planner noted retrospectively was his own view more than STMBC's (JW: interview 04/03, see footnote 217).

In the context of STMBC, this equated to limiting the *ucs* to the main urban area and sites within the outlying villages, as everything else was green belt. This position highlighted the need to explore the urban area, and portrayed the idea of extending development into the green belt as so drastic it should not be considered at all in the first instance. In effect it implied that the *ucs* would find adequate housing development opportunity within the existing built-up (urban) area. The presumption of under-use in this suggestion is closer to this research's Opportunity Model, but the suggestion itself does not accord well with STMBC's view, a point made by the planner himself.

Some emphasised a more sequential approach, suggesting the boundaries should be borough-wide, i.e. including the green belt, but that the urban area should be considered first, and the green belt should be reserved as an option should it prove necessary.²²⁵ In the first instance the urban area and outlying villages would be included, but sites in the green belt would not. Here the 'study stages' were also understood to be temporal/sequential; first finding the *uc* of the urban area, then (as a second stage of the *ucs*) finding the development capacity of the green belt area. This is a different way of using *ucs* stages

²²³ 'Either way I could be very cynical and saying you choose a method depending on how you feel' (CA: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

²²⁴ 'TiP says that you've got to define your area of search, obviously, and again being controversial what if we said "well, yeah, it is our area of search, and by the way we have excluded the green belt"?' (JW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²²⁵ 'If you're looking at *uc* then the ...initial thing would be...your urban area. These ... studies are going to have to be everything that's not in the green belt. What can we get in *there* before we go into green belt'. [And later] 'That's what I said- excluding green belt. That's the initial study area, and if you can't do it then you go to... [interrupted and stops]' (FP: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

from the way that *TtP* presents them, but suggests a connecting of the idea of *uc* to the 'sequential approach'. This position accepted that the urban area was constrained, but also that the green belt ought to be afforded some protection and that either by sequencing the search, or by completing a search of the whole area and then sequencing the release of sites in the green belt after sites in urban areas, both positions could be held.

Other practitioners highlighted the *ucs*'s focus on the urban area,²²⁶ but here the emphasis was on the necessary attendant service and facility provision in urban areas to ensure adequate provision for both the new housing and the existing development, rather than on the issue of excluding or including the green belt. This emphasis also highlighted the constraint of the urban area over the green belt, perhaps undermining the exclusion of the green belt claim.

Both of these practitioners' views (only resorting to considering the green belt area if necessary and focusing on the urban area) implied that the boundary might be quite tight: just the main urban area. One emphasised that the drawn boundary might only be an initial position, highlighting the idea that, once (not if) the development limit of the urban area (i.e. the *uc*) had been established as being too constrained, then other areas (i.e. green belt) would be explored- also as *uc*. The other emphasised the idea that urban use is much more than housing use, and, secondarily, that viable housing development needs much more than just housing units in terms of infrastructure, facilities and services, which take up more land. This highlighted the development that would need to be accommodated in addition to the housing units, emphasising the likely inability of the urban area to accommodate this adequately.

Both positions concede that, on finding the limits of the urban area (i.e. finite *uc*), other areas (i.e. green belt) would need to be explored. This extended the definition-through-inclusion of *uc* to include green belt. It also established the likelihood that the initial urban area was constrained (i.e. finite urban area *uc*) but that through definitional changes accommodations could be made, i.e. through the expansion into the green belt.

These suggestions (aired at the workshop 2001) gave space for STMBC to consider the built-up area first and subsequently, if necessary, the green belt within the same study. This initially implies urban housing development-opportunity but allows for the possibility that the urban area may be found to be limited in its ability to accommodate additional housing. Therefore whilst it adopts an attitude of exploration it retains the idea that the

²²⁶ 'Well, one thing is it is an *urban capacity study*' (KB workshop 03/01 tape 1).

urban area has a development threshold, at which point it would be preferable to develop in the green belt, altering designations if necessary.

However, for some this did not adequately reflect STMBC's concerns over town-cramming and village viability (see section 9.5.1 and section 9.5.4), and they advocated the need to look at the green belt and urban area together-²²⁷ effectively a borough wide study. Here the exclusion of the green belt was seen as skewing results to individual's personal priorities rather than to STMBC's requirements,²²⁸ and the argument that 'urban' could be defined in terms of use rather than built-form was used as justification of this position.²²⁹ The position was further endorsed through comments about the STMBC's green belt being an oddity in the middle of a recognised regional conurbation.²³⁰ This effectively identified the green belt as an integral part of the conurbation rather than the built up area's boundary. These comments were also interspersed by questions about the value of the green belt (see section 9.5.6).

Taken together, these arguments suggested that the *ucs* should be a borough-wide study, not just one limited to the built-up area, downplaying the distinctive difference between green belt and the built-up area. They accept, if not prefer, the likely green belt incursion and reiterate the idea that the built-up area was constrained.²³¹ This construction of a borough-wide survey in the context of a borough with a green belt, and with a view that the green belt will be breached, suggests a very constrained view of the built-up area's ability to accommodate development, i.e finite capacity already reached, and a very wide understanding of the idea of *uc* in terms of the coverage of land to be included. Effectively this equates in STMBC's case to an understanding of *uc* as more constrained than this research's Constrained Model.

²²⁷ 'I'm not convinced you start by looking at all the urban land on a certain menu I think that you look at both [urban area and green belt] at the same time.' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²²⁸ FP: 'I've seen the first stage that deal with the existing urban sites and then...'

PD (interrupts) 'well that's ...your priority... that [is] skewing the study. I think we should look at both [urban area and green belt] at the same time'

(FP and PD: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²²⁹ 'You have to look at the two together and I know we have to do an *ucs* but in a way you said the definition of urban land can be, is a bit wider than just saying the urban built-up area [referring to *PPG3:2000* definition of 'urban' with its emphasis on use] so I think you look at the two and I don't think we can escape looking at green belt sites for development.' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²³⁰ 'Don't you find it rather artificial as green belt in South Tyneside, I mean in the middle of a DETR conurbation?' (CA: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²³¹ Before proper inquiry- given that this is something the study is designed to establish.

At the workshop this view appeared to prevail,²³² and certainly accorded with STMBC's then position on their built-up area and their green belt (see section 9.5). However, the suggested urban area,²³³ subsequently taken up in the *ucs* South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft), was the built-up area with the outlying villages, excluding the green belt. Three factors account for this apparent change in thinking. Firstly, the reduced cost of a less extensive search (i.e. not including the green belt) had positive resource implications. Secondly, the planner instrumental in the *ucs* design was the one whose preferences excluded the green belt.²³⁴ Thirdly, the reason given in the documentation was that Gateshead had used the same method.²³⁵ So, for mixed reasons, the methods which inferred greater urban housing development opportunity prevailed, despite STMBC's argued case of constraint.

In terms of the *ucs*' identification of development-opportunities, STMBC discussed the likely outcomes of the different development-opportunity categories at the workshop (see 9.5.1), and came to the view that they had investigated most development-opportunity options either through providing information to the region (for the North East Arup Study),²³⁶ or through their own South Tyneside Brownfield Study.²³⁷ Consequently, they felt that most of the 'new' development-opportunity categories suggested in *TtP* (p.10) were not new²³⁸ and that the development-opportunity categories they had previously left out, e.g. redevelopment-of-housing, had been discarded because STMBC had ascertained their limited opportunity,²³⁹ or because they were not applicable to STMBC. Moreover, STMBC thought that past trends showed that many of the 'new' categories, e.g. LOTS, indicated low yields, and other new categories, notably employment sites and car-park redevelopment, were fraught with political difficulties, as well as social and environmental concerns. Therefore STMBC felt their understanding of *uc* already included these development-opportunities. They also felt that previous efforts had exceeded *TtP*'s suggested development-opportunity categories (e.g. in the inclusion of open-space).²⁴⁰

²³² Workshop 03/01 transcript tapes.

²³³ *South Tyneside Urban Potential Study – Outline Methodology*.

²³⁴ Here it should be noted that the *ucs* method decisions were also approved by others in the department.

²³⁵ This third reason effectively made STMBC's *ucs* compatible with Gateshead's in this aspect. One of the criticisms made by this particular planner about the North East's co-ordination of *uc* has been the inconsistency of methods across the authorities, and therefore the inability to compare or combine results.

²³⁶ Fully listed in *Figure 8.2* chapter 8.

²³⁷ Fully listed in *Figure 8.2* chapter 8.

²³⁸ '... and we have looked at those already' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

²³⁹ The reasons for not looking at the redevelopment of existing housing are outlined in section 9.7.1.

²⁴⁰ The North East Arup Study (p.21-22) excluded open-space from its calculations after considering its implications.

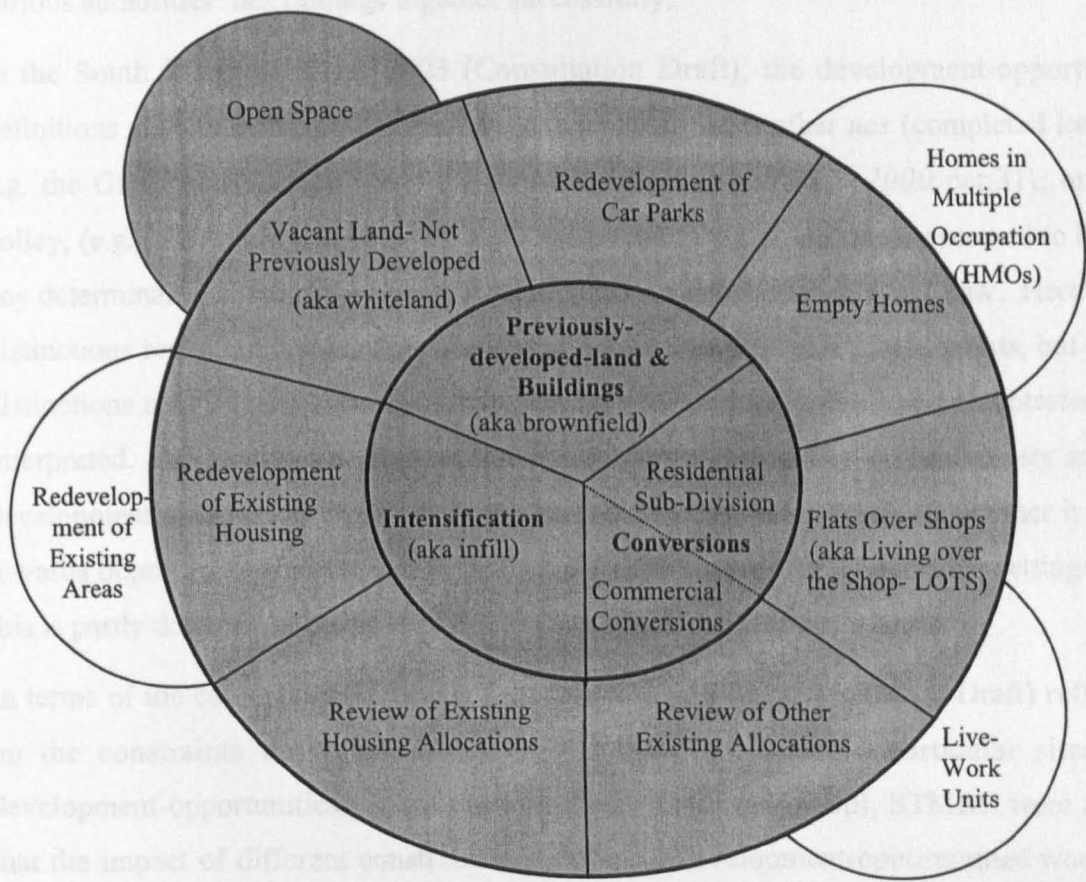
This would suggest an Opportunity Model of *uc*. However, whilst entertaining these opportunities briefly, they tended to construct them in negative ways, often drawing on trend data, past experience, or political difficulties as reasons for dismissal. This would suggest a more constrained position on *uc*. Moreover, this seeming latitude in thinking had not resulted in finding much more housing development-opportunity, effectively augmenting their view of the built-up area as constrained.

Nevertheless, South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft) included all the *TtP* development-opportunity categories and green space (see *Figure 9.6* p.393), suggesting that STMBC, like other authorities, have incorporated the various *TtP* development-opportunity categories into their understanding of *uc*. This demonstrates STMBC broadening their understanding of *uc* from their earlier position, perhaps primarily through requirement. However, STMBC also extended their source categories to include open space,²⁴¹ taken from the Gateshead *ucs* method. These sites were excluded later in the *ucs*, primarily on sustainability grounds as the need for open space in urban areas to ensuring their liveability was recognised.

This finding endorses that in chapter 8: firstly that the development-opportunities are increasingly uniform, determined by *TtP*; secondly, that the core development-opportunities have widened out, with *ucs* tending to include these development-opportunities at least, rather than at most; thirdly, that open-space, even when included initially, tends to be excluded subsequently, highlighting its importance as an urban use. This suggests that in development-opportunities terms, *uc* can increasingly be defined as including the *TtP* development-opportunity categories, making it effectively the amount of housing opportunity to be found in the list of *TtP*'s development-opportunity categories in a defined urban area.

²⁴¹ Open-space where more than 50% of the boundary abutted built-up uses.

Figure 9.6 The development-opportunities investigated by South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft)



However, whilst the development-opportunity categories may be increasingly uniform, STMBC practitioners suggest this uniformity breaks down at the detailed level. This non-conformity can only be seen through cross-study comparison (see chapter 8). However, STMBC were aware of various authorities' differing source definitions in terms of what they included into a development-opportunity category, and where they drew the lines,²⁴² and that this was partly due to the differing understandings of *PPG3:2000* par.31. Therefore they concluded that the *ucs* were not compatible and that, when discussing *uc*, local authorities were not necessarily talking about the same thing.²⁴³ This incompatibility was ascribed to different policy interpretations being adapted into the *ucs* methods, at the very detailed level. This discrepancy is accentuated when regions amalgamate the results,

²⁴² North East region authorities were using very different development-opportunity definitions. JW's notes from the 23/10/01 GO-NE meeting highlighted the fact that differences of opinion had arisen over *PPG3:2000* par.31 which helps identify sites, and that there had also been a variety of differing opinions and circumstances expressed by the various authorities on the defining of different site thresholds. The Newsome et al (2002) research project also highlighted this point.

²⁴³ '...if you take a region such as ours, different authorities have approached this in a different way, which I don't think is too helpful because ... at the end of the day Government Office ... produce a patchwork quilt [of *uc* figures]' (JW: interview 04/03).

and practitioners at STMBC were interested in how the region was going to draw the various authorities' *ucs* findings together successfully.

In the South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft), the development-opportunity definitions and boundary details had either been taken from other *ucs* (completed locally, e.g. the Gateshead Study),²⁴⁴ or from current policy, (e.g. *PPG3:2000* par.31), or past policy, (e.g. small sites as >0.4 ha sites).²⁴⁵ Therefore practice and policy seemed to be the key determinants in deciding on the detail of what would be included and how. Here 'old' distinctions remained, perhaps for very good reasons, and acted as fixed points, but these distinctions may be constraining. Additionally, new policy was still being contested and interpreted, effectively changing what was being assessed as *uc*. This suggests an *ucs* development-opportunity choice can only be fully understood in terms of whether it tends towards opportunity or constraint in the context of these policies within their settings, and this is partly determined by the way it is defined and by the way it is treated.

In terms of the constraints the South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft) reflected on the constraints through the way STMBC applied them to particular sites and development-opportunities. From the outset (the 2001 workshop), STMBC were aware that the impact of different constraints on different development-opportunities would be difficult to ascertain and apply.²⁴⁶ The constraints they paid particular attention to were those relating to the physical characteristics of the sites themselves or the wider locality, including accessibility to shops and facilities. One issue was the developability of contaminated sites, with the main constraint being market viability, particularly in the market context of STMB. They thought that housebuilders would not risk investing in such complicated sites for such low returns. This highlights the complexity of the constraints, creating the difficulty -and perhaps the arbitrariness- of deciding whether a constraint is a site characteristic, a development issue, or a market concern, because they tend to roll into one, and all impact on the site.

In relation to this research's models, these reflections on site attributes were primarily constraining, noting the difficulties, without considering how they might be overcome; this was reserved for consideration in feasibility studies (reminiscent of the Wychavon Study-

²⁴⁴ Open-space was included and this was defined as 'open space that has 50% or more of its boundary abutting the urban area; and other open land completely surrounded by and adjoining existing built up area.' This definition was taken from the Gateshead Study (*South Tyneside's Urban Potential Study Background Information*).

²⁴⁵ >0.4 ha were classed as small sites, and not individually surveyed. This definition was first used in *PPG3:1992* with regard to windfall.

²⁴⁶ 'When it comes to discounting the devil is in the detail' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

see chapter 7.7.2 Scenario 4). This relates back to the purpose the practitioners gave to the *ucs*, with its emphasis on supporting existing policy in the context of existing, albeit changing, circumstances, rather than as a document to explore policy positions they were unlikely ever to take up.

In terms of the physical characteristics of the wider locality, the constraints were more policy-driven, reflected more in the yield assessment methods than the discounting ones, focusing as they did on density, the lack of central car-parks and open-space; and centred around their ideas of already being cramped, and the unwillingness by some to entertain the idea of increasing density. This was based on their perception of STMB and its needs, sometimes linked to how practitioners thought the communities and politicians might react. Here too, the emphasis of the discussion centred on the inability of the urban area to take more, rather than on ways to overcome this; indeed as has already been seen there were some practitioners who were actively against relaxing policy constraints such as density. Again this relates back to the purpose of the *ucs*.

In the *ucs* the identified constraints were, firstly, the physical constraints, both on and off the site, identified through their survey. The second identified constraint was the sustainability of developing the site, derived from the data collected in their survey and their own sustainability criteria. The third constraint was the developability of the site; this related to both the site specifically, e.g. ownership, and also more contextually, e.g. the market.

The main constraint was the site's sustainability. This was evaluated against a range of practitioner-identified sustainable criteria,²⁴⁷ and highlighted issues such as proximity to facilities and transport links, use of previously-developed-land, etc. In comparison to some of the other *ucs* these issues have often been considered in survey technique using prioritised areas. By considering them this way STMBC effectively brings some sites into the *ucs* which some *ucs* might exclude. Moreover, the criteria are phrased with an emphasis on encouraging development where the site fulfils the criteria, rather than discouraging development where it does not. Whilst the outcome may be similar, the impression may be seen to lean more to the Opportunity Model of *uc* than to the Constrained Model.

The second major constraint was the site's developability in terms of its condition, current use, and locality. For most sites, the authority decided this on the survey information, and

²⁴⁷ All the practitioners were asked to list sustainability criteria, and the ten that occurred most frequently were considered the key ones.

either the whole site or part of the site was discounted. In STMBC some sites were thought possible for some development but not for complete development; for example, a school playing field might be kept and changed into public green space, but the redundant buildings were included within the *ucs*. In contrast to other *ucs*, this partial discounting of some sites appears unique and helps to keep sites in the assessment which in other *ucs* would have been discounted. The Environment Agency will be contacted as part of STMBC's consultation process to review the remaining sites in the *ucs*, and some of the sites may be discarded on the basis of their independent advice. Here the advice seems to focus on discarding sites, rather than on considering how other sites could be brought forward, and this is constraining.

The third constraint was the marketability of the site. This will be decided through consulting with the local HBF, and also local estate agents, to get a sense of the housing market in STMB, its hot spots, cold spots, housing preferences, particularly in the owner-occupation sector, to gain a sense of the likely value of the schemes that STMBC thinks are acceptable in terms of density etc. Their reflections will also be included in the discounting process and may result in some further discounting. However, STMBC are of the opinion that the number of sites discounted in this way should be relatively few. Again the emphasis on this part of the process appears to be on what the market will exclude, and the opportunity to discuss how sites might be made feasible, perhaps increasing the *uc*, does not appear to be being taken up.

The *ucs* has given considerable thought to sustainability, and is giving space to other organisations for comment on the viability and developability of the sites left in the *ucs*. These considerations all seem to reduce the opportunities, with little thought given to what might be necessary, or indeed possible, to make these sites viable.

However, STMBC propose to use development briefs (feasibility studies) for the sites remaining in the *ucs*. These will give guidance on design issues, the acceptable types of development, and the site constraints that would need to be overcome, for would-be developers. For the sites retained in the *ucs*, this suggests that some consideration is being given as to how to optimise their opportunity; reflecting the Opportunity Model. However, given STMBC's past experience of believing sites were unviable which the market subsequently took up, it raises a question over the possible opportunities lost through the discounting process; although this has been carefully and thoroughly done, with a record kept for why each site was discounted, i.e. the discounting constrained these sites before they could be assessed. Here the resource implications of completing design briefs for more sites, thought untenable, is a consideration, particularly in the light of STMBC

finding sufficient opportunity in the urban area to accommodate their housing requirement for the next 12 years without this consideration.

Taken as a whole, it would appear that STMBC have carried out a thorough *ucs* (compared to some others), and have tried to reflect on the issues facing development-opportunities categories and specific sites and buildings, although as with some of the other *ucs* some of this detail is being done in related future documents (development briefs).

In terms of the *ucs* method-types STMBC decided that they would produce a comprehensive survey (in this research a total coverage survey).²⁴⁸ This was partly because they felt that to argue the case of a constrained built-up area (finite *uc*), they needed to demonstrate that all development-opportunities had been explored. This raised resource concerns in some quarters,²⁴⁹ but the view was that this survey could be absorbed into other required work e.g. NLUD work.²⁵⁰ Therefore in STMBC's case, the *ucs* was not immediately limited by resource limitations, allowing them to investigate most if not all of the possible housing development opportunities within the defined urban areas.²⁵¹ Here the aim was to prove the null hypothesis that there was not enough housing opportunity in the urban area, and to prove it, STMBC would use the most exploratory approach. Therefore STMBC (with a few notable exceptions, including the practitioner in charge of the *ucs*) adopted a method aimed at discovering the most *uc* to try to prove the reverse in their case.

Initially STMBC looked at the *TtP* survey method-types and Gateshead's method, and decided to complete a total coverage survey to identified sites and buildings, and to use a typical-urban-area method to ascertain the development-opportunity of other development-opportunity categories.²⁵² However, in the event, the development-opportunities were calculated more through Yardsticks, compared against past trends, than through a Typical-Urban-Area method. These various sites and buildings were identified firstly by checking STMBC's current databases, and in so doing discovered that many of these information

²⁴⁸ STMBC call this survey a comprehensive survey but for consistency in terminology in this research this type of survey will as elsewhere be referred to as a total-coverage-survey.

²⁴⁹ 'If you are going to look at every site - I mean that's one hell of a lot of work' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 1)

²⁵⁰ 'I'm in charge of [producing STMBC's information for] NLUD. We're going to be looking at that again completely and I think it would be all over the borough. I think by the time you do that that will be a significant element towards this' (FP: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²⁵¹ However, as noted elsewhere the exclusion of the green belt from the definition of the urban area reduced the resource costs by reducing the search area.

²⁵² See *South Tyneside's Urban Potential Study- Outline Methodology*.

sources were dated and inaccurate.²⁵³ The practitioner orchestrating the *ucs* talked to all the other STMBC departments; the leisure department, the education department etc., to identify additional available sites, including those known to be coming up on the basis of these departments' current policies²⁵⁴ and the local trends,²⁵⁵ and other -missed- sites were identified when on site visits. Therefore the survey primarily included all sites from the public sector, augmented by known private sector sites and observations. Two planning student surveyors visited these development-opportunities (391 in all) and completed a proforma (designed in-house). This provided the necessary information to complete the rest of the *ucs*.²⁵⁶ The sites were mapped and a summative profile of each one was recorded. The survey included all sites over 0.4 ha,²⁵⁷ sites which could potentially be used for future housing development, buildings with potential for conversion of 10 dwellings or more, and sites where mixed use might be appropriate.

For opportunities that were not sites²⁵⁸ STMBC first thought they would use typical urban area survey methods based on the land use, density and development character of the local area in which the site was situated, and linked these to yardsticks relating to the category of

²⁵³ JW: 09/02 minutes.

²⁵⁴ For example their education department had an agreed policy that certain schools would be closed, and these sites would then be available for development.

²⁵⁵ Vacancy rates, housing market trends, housing condition, and local housing need for example were collected from the housing department.

²⁵⁶ This (i) categorised the site: whether the site was previously-developed-land/building, existing housing land allocation, land allocated for employment use, open space, conversion of building, something else- (with space for further comment available), and whether the site was a site, a building or a combination of site and building;

(ii) outlined the planning context;

(iii) made note of some of the site characteristics- its net and gross hectareage its usage- in use (as what), derelict, vacant, under-used;

(iv) made note of the building characteristics in the same way- allowing for multiple buildings on a site, and asking whether the building looked suitable for residential conversion;

(v) made a physical appraisal of the surrounding area- density, character of area- terraced, semis, flats mixed, other uses and whether these had an adverse impact on development opportunity, and constraints- utilities access flooding topography ground condition etc.;

(vi) carried out a development control consultation, including a discussion about site with development control on the planning history, any known details about interest from developers, permissions etc, (with space for more detailed comment);

(vii) contained a sustainability checklist: which included an accessibility matrix considering proximity to jobs, services, shops and public transport, and consideration on the ability to green the environment through the development of the site, (with options and space for further comment);

(viii) commented on infrastructure reflecting on ability of existing and proposed services to absorb new development; and

(ix) commented on developability reflecting on ownership and estate agent comments.

Initial assessment sheet included: density dw/ha, the impact of the other information on bringing development forward, whether design input was necessary and what needed to be considered. Finally there was a sheet for other comment.

²⁵⁷ I.e. not infill sites- intensification was considered separately.

²⁵⁸ Subdivision of existing housing, LOTS, empty homes, intensification (i.e. infill- missed out of survey as sites are less than 0.4 ha) and redevelopment of existing housing.

the development-opportunity, e.g. yardsticks designed to calculate the development-opportunity of LOTS.

However, in carrying out the total coverage survey STMBC discovered considerably more sites than anticipated, and obsolescence, inconsistencies and inaccuracies in their own data. This is not surprising as a land search can only be a snapshot of a dynamic process, reflecting the position as it was rather than how it is.²⁵⁹ This reiterates the importance of completing a total coverage survey to find all the possible development- opportunities, and underlines the fact that other methods, particularly the existing-data method, are likely to limit the end findings. It also demonstrates that this method favours the Opportunity Model of *uc*, even when it is being utilised to prove the opposite case- urban constraint.²⁶⁰

A further problem that STMBC encountered was the inability to access buildings, and the subsequent difficulty of assessing development-opportunity without proper information on their state of repair, internal design, contamination, etc. This would ultimately influence the likelihood of the building being used at all and whether it could be converted. It would also have some bearing on the choice between demolition and rebuilding (i.e. cleared site) or conversion; and it would also affect the decision over whether the building was more suitable for residential or mixed use.

In the discussion on yield assessment, the STMBC argued case of an already densely developed built-up area was linked in a number of ways to the liveability of these localities (see section 9.5.1). Therefore the issue of yield densities was viewed in a constrained way.

At the workshop one practitioner was concerned about both density multipliers and designed approaches. He linked densities to market viability, and questioned what the market would accept, particularly given STMB's past experience of attracting development.²⁶¹ This effectively links density as a yield-assessment to the discounting process before it is calculated. He also expressed concern from past experience²⁶² that, if density ranges were used, housebuilders would opt for the highest density to maximise return without due

²⁵⁹ This was a problem they reiterated in 2003 in relation to this *ucs*, highlighting the fact that they would need to update it periodically, sometimes starting completely afresh: KB: 'you have got to start again albeit under fresh premises; the criteria on which you assess sites has to go back down to a sort of year zero every so often' (KB interview 03/03).

²⁶⁰ Here it should be noted that the person in charge of the *ucs* was the practitioner who was trying to protect the green belt whilst most other practitioners were arguing for urban constraint.

²⁶¹ 'I'm not keen on even putting density bounds or conversion numbers on the site where we have no idea what the market will take, what the cost and value of that land is' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

²⁶² 'Experience way back that at least once where we gave a range of densities for new housing development we ended up with the highest density. Sod the design, you know, nothing else was considered by the house builder, it was just "well you said we could have up to this"' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

regard for other constraining issues, and they would use the density range to justify it.²⁶³ Again this links the yield-assessment to the discounting of constraints, and argued a case that, if density-multipliers were used then low density-multipliers should be used, constraining the yield-assessment. The alternative was to go for site-specific densities applied individually.²⁶⁴ Here concerns were raised about the quality of the development that would occur if these densities were imposed.²⁶⁵ The thinking emerged that the site considerations, including character, should be factored into the density and could be done so on a site-by-site basis, once the sites had been surveyed, and that to choose densities without due regard to the site was clearly a nonsense.²⁶⁶ Therefore the practice of surveying the site and considering its characteristics first, and then applying a single density deemed appropriate to the site, was seen as a possible way forward. This yield-assessment method was completed for all the sites whether they were discounted or not, although the only figures presented were those that related to the sites that were not discounted.

When it came to design, the same practitioner could not see the point of a design relating to a site in advance of a development proposal. He also thought designs which demonstrated higher densities would be equated to density and the design element, such as it was, would be lost (see footnote 262). This produced a discussion on design and the government suggestion of refusals on design grounds. A different practitioner suggested design could be linked to local character on particularly sensitive sites, again on a site-by-site basis. This, too, links design to discounting. Therefore the design issue centred on design quality, local area sensitivity and development quality, without linking design specifically to sites' housing yields. Ultimately the discussion favoured appraising each site whilst surveying it, and applying that density, accounting for the sites' characteristics and location, rather than blanket density-multipliers. Development briefs which included a design element would support these appraisals and would try to ensure design quality. Therefore, design was not seen as a generator of yield -linked to policy- but rather a reflection of the sites' constraints.

²⁶³ 'What's the point of doing a design in the advance of development proposal for a site? Does anybody disagree or agree with that?' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

²⁶⁴ 'Unless you go into a very detailed assessment of each particular site' (PD: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

²⁶⁵ 'The last thing we want to do is impose absolute density site by site for development- that's no way to get decent development' (CA: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²⁶⁶ 'You've got to agree that each site would build in particular characteristics, put very simplistically it is a nonsense just to put a line around a site, apply a density and say yes we can get x out of it' (JW: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

In the event, STMBC applied a 'realistic' density to each site, taking into consideration its site and locality characteristics. The lowest applied density was 30 dw/ha in accordance with the new *PPG3:2000* advice, and where appropriate, STMBC applied densities as high as 50 dw/ha. These sites were near facilities and transport, but the sites' physical constraints and the localities' characteristics were also taken into account. These densities are arguably as policy-led as density-multipliers in other *ucs*, using as they do the government's advised density range. They also impose higher densities on similar grounds to other authorities who attached them to a policy, e.g. proximity to transport links (see chapter 7). However, given the emphasis on the site characteristics -its accessibility, its topography- these densities also reflect and contain some of the constraints.

In addition to applying 'an appropriate' density to the site, and as an integral but extra exercise, STMBC intend to complete development briefs for each of the sites that remained in the *ucs* (after the discounting) to highlight the various issues, including the design quality issues that need to be overcome. Therefore to the degree that design is included in STMBC's concept of *uc*, it is linked to notions of the urban area's liveability and of improving the quality of the built form and the character of the area. The designs will be used to support the applied densities, but are complementary rather than leading. The development briefs may help in highlighting the availability of a site and the site's particular characteristics and constraints to a would-be developer, as well as the authority's position on its use for future housing. To this degree the development brief is evidence of STMBC's move towards an understanding of *uc* more closely aligned to this research's Opportunity Model.

The various yardstick formulae for assessing the yield from various building types were not really discussed at the workshop. However, there were views about the likely take-up of some of the development-opportunities that required yardsticks, notably LOTS and housing redevelopment. STMBC did review the various yardsticks being suggested in *TtP*,²⁶⁷ but in the event found many of these yardsticks unhelpful.²⁶⁸

Instead, they often calculated the total stock of a particular development-opportunity e.g. empty homes,²⁶⁹ and then used *TtP*'s suggested figure for a reasonable discount in that particular development-opportunity category (see *TtP* p.33), i.e. 80% in the case of empty

²⁶⁷ STMBC working document: *Urban Potential Study- Evaluation of non site-specific potential*.

²⁶⁸ 'As I learned, the way somebody in Essex approached say flats over shops is almost irrelevant to the way that you approach flats over shops in South Tyneside, because the pressures are very different' (JW: interview 04/03).

²⁶⁹ This total figure was derived from the council tax figure.

homes. However in some instances this appeared to produce estimates that were far too high; for example they calculated residential subdivisions on the grounds that 4-bed dwellings could be subdivided, and a proportion of these subdivisions would come forward- taken from *TtP*. Yet, when compared against recent subdivisions, the trend demonstrated that, rather than increasing the housing stock, in fact more subdivided houses were being converted back into single units than were being subdivided, resulting in a net loss, not net gain. Therefore, it was considered unrealistic to assume any gain from this development-opportunity category and the category was discounted. In another development-opportunity category -LOTS- it was felt that for at least one part of the category the yardstick was far too high, and therefore for an identified part of the development-opportunity the calculation was made on what seemed more realistic, based on local observation, which produced a much lower figure, but which did represent the possibility that some development might occur from this development-opportunity.

Therefore in the South Tyneside 2003 Study (Consultation Draft) STMBC have considered all other development-opportunities suggested by *TtP*. However, some were subsequently dropped as being too unrealistic when compared against existing trends; these were residential subdivision, and intensification, and although calculated as part of the *ucs*, the *ucs* states that empty homes fall outside the control of the planning system. This suggests, that like other *ucs* around the country, STMBC is also considering *uc* in the context of *TtP*'s assessment-content definitions (see chapter 8), but have also found that they have had to adapt their approach to reflect local need. Here too their reversion to trends, when the yardsticks appeared too unrealistic, reinstates the historic thinking on these particular development-opportunities, suggesting a more constrained application than is first apparent. However, STMBC has considered a much wider list of development-opportunities than they had done previously, in keeping with *TtP* thinking, and have used Yardsticks where it was thought possible, suggesting a willingness to extend their thinking.

When it came to discounting, STMBC had collected relevant site and building information at the Survey stage. The first issue was the site's development viability. Here some sites were discounted because of perceived insurmountable problems, e.g. some access problems, or topography problems. Other sites were thought to be viable, but not immediately; perhaps due to the need for time-consuming site preparation, e.g. remediation or clearance, which incidentally might also discourage developer interest, or because the current use of a site was known to be culminating and then the site would be vacant, e.g. school closures.

Here realism was thought to be important, with the emphasis firmly placed on only including sites that were genuinely viable; in this context the *TtP* advice was thought to be too theoretical.²⁷⁰ This suggests that the *ucs* only investigated certainties. Yet only recently, STMBC have been surprised about the sites that attract developer interest and would have excluded some of the sites as unviable in previous studies. This highlights *TtP*'s (p.32) point that the market tends to find more *uc* than the *ucs* designed to look for it (see chapter 8).

However, as the *ucs*' purpose becomes more fixed on finding appropriate sites and buildings, rather than being a place to explore policy, and as it becomes an increasingly public document supporting policy and listing sites, the system aimed at encouraging policy exploration effectively forces the planner to be conservative in his/her approach. This is so that (s)he does not seem ridiculous and/or far-fetched in his development assumptions, and also so that the authority does not present sites which, a developer could argue, have been effectively allocated through their exploratory inclusion in the *ucs*.²⁷¹ Therefore, as the idea of *uc* moves into the heart of planning for housing, through the requirement to produce an *ucs* rather than a land availability study, so the *ucs*' function changes, and the aim to enable space for policy to be explored is lost to the need to present robust *ucs* findings not open to refutation or misuse. Effectively then the studies remain constrained in their outlook on policy and the way it constrains development and affects development viability.

Another key issue, which STMBC thought *TtP* dealt with poorly, was sustainability (see above). Here STMBC used a set of sustainability criteria. Each site was assessed against these criteria and it was decided that the development on that site was highly sustainable, medium or low, and the reasons for this assessment were recorded. A low scoring site was usually excluded from further consideration. However one practitioner also noted that sustainability was not so much an issue of something either being sustainable or not, but rather could be a development that was more sustainable or less sustainable than what was

²⁷⁰ 'I think the exercise has emphasised to me... a gulf exists between the theory and the practice... when you read *TtP*, when you actually set out the housing capacity in an area like ST you begin to think ... this is all a bit too ethereal, too much theory; not enough attention has been paid to the actual practicalities of the situation, and I hopefully address those in the study' (JW: interview 04/03).

²⁷¹ Referring to the inclusion of public open space: '...there is a danger that this [inclusion] could be interpreted that the development potential of such sites is therefore being recognised/ratified.' STMBC *Working Paper- South Tyneside Urban Potential Study Background Information 04/01*.

already there.²⁷² This suggests that sustainability is comparative not absolute, although it retains the idea that STMBC should try to increase sustainability rather than decrease it.

Some sites were discounted after the survey on sustainability and viability grounds, reducing the number of sites from almost 400 to 28 sites. All the sites had their yield assessed, but only the 28 remaining sites were included in the *ucs* calculation, and were considered in detail. Again in an effort to be realistic, STMBC applied densities on the basis of existing *UDP* and *PPG3:2000* policy. Here there seemed little point applying policy scenarios that were not reflected in existing policy, which would compromise STMBC's ability to defend firstly the *ucs* and its findings, and secondly the policies themselves. Therefore the applied policies were existing ones, although they were set in the context of the recent changes in policy guidance and therefore suggested higher densities (between 30 dw/ha and 50 dw/ha). STMBC also applied densities that reflected the site's locality and physical constraints. Taken together, the non-consideration of policy, the inclusion of site constraint considerations, and the lack of designs to explore what is possible suggest that density was applied in a constraining way, even if it was taking into account the higher densities suggested by planning guidance.

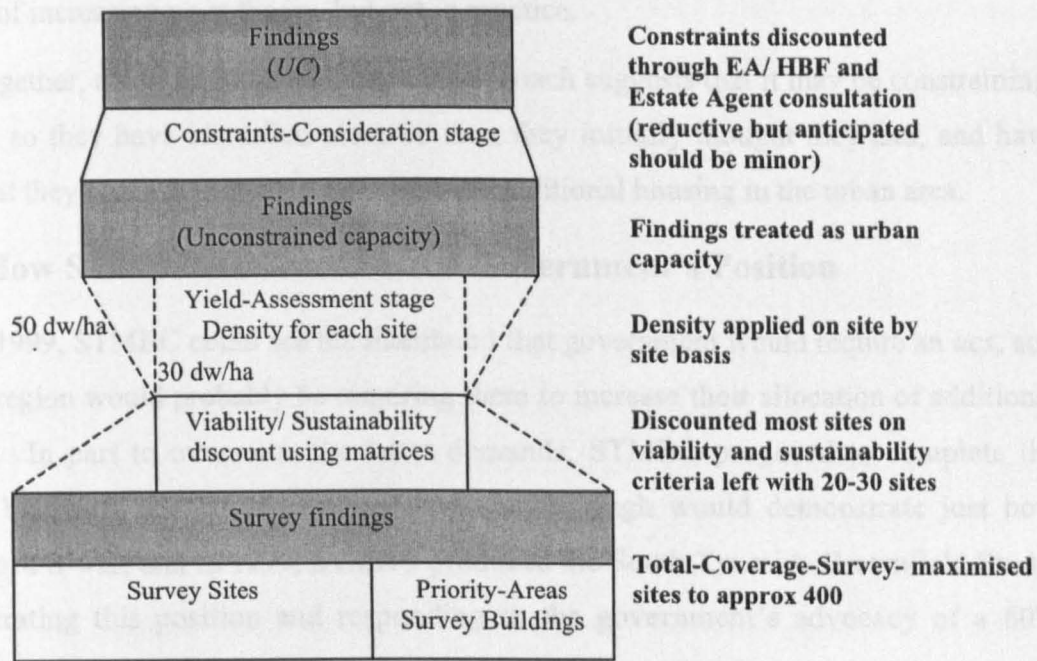
The *ucs* was presented in a consultation document in the first instance, which was being officially agreed by councillors in August 2003, and which was then going to be sent out to the EA, the HBF, and discussed with local estate agents.²⁷³ Furthermore additional development brief work was going to be done on the sites included within the *ucs*. The research work stopped at this point due to time considerations.

Taken together (see *Figure 9.7*), the total-coverage-survey, the definition of the urban area, and the choice of development-opportunities all maximised STMBC's ability to find additional housing opportunity in the urban area. Indeed they made the point that more sites had emerged than expected.

²⁷² 'I think this is what people forget about sustainability, it's not a yes/no, it is what is the best that we can achieve under the given circumstances in which we are positioned. So a lot of the sites, well all of the sites that have got through to the final scrutiny that we are presenting to the HBF in due course, have been assessed for their relative sustainability in a range of sort of key factors which include access to local shops and services, access to bus stops within walking distances and so on.' (KB: interview 03/03).

²⁷³ 'Once the document has been approved [internally], then we will embark on a consultation process. We will go to the Environment Agency and we will go to the housing market, namely the HBF, and ... the local estate agents as well and ...this is likely to reduce the current figure of ... housing units' (JW: interview 04/03).

Figure 9.7 Illustrative diagram of South Tyneside’s Study 2003 methodological approach



However, in an effort to be realistic practically, by finishing the *ucs* in a reasonable timeframe, and pragmatically, by producing a list of plausible sites for HBF to review; they discounted the majority of sites prior to calculating the yield. This effectively meant they did not find the unconstrained capacity (as defined by *TtP* and discussed in chapter 6). Here STMBC part company from the government’s position and advice -with *TtP* advising the need to explore policy, and discount late- and STMBC partially discounting before the Yield- Assessment stage on the grounds that the government’s advice is ‘too theoretical’.²⁷⁴ This early discounting also constrains their ability to find additional development-opportunity.

The *ucs* also applies densities according to their existing *UDP* policy and the new *PPG3:2000*. Prior to 2000, it could be argued that the *PPG3:2000* density suggestions were exploratory but, in the light of the new *PPG3*, they now appear to be existing policy. The density multipliers were also applied to the sites on a site-by-site basis according to the constraints found on the sites. This may be constraining, as it may have reduced the densities that were applied on some sites without fully exploring the possibility that some of these constraints might change (if for instance the market changed), or that some of the constraints might be overcomeable either by developers willing to take a risk, or through policy changes. Again STMBC argued their decision on the grounds of plausibility and

²⁷⁴ Some of the sieving in other *ucs* also appear to discount early (see section 7.6).

practicality, with one practitioner expressing the view that there was no point in ignoring existing policy or in suggesting that other unrealistic or unacceptable policy be applied for the sake of increasing *uc* in theory, but not in practice.

Taken together, much of STMBC's method approach suggests that it may be constraining, but even so they have identified more *uc* than they initially thought they had, and have found that they can accommodate most of their additional housing in the urban area.

9.8 How STMBC Reflected on the Government's Position

Prior to 1999, STMBC could see the likelihood that government would require an *ucs*, and that the region would probably be requiring them to increase their allocation of additional housing. In part to overcome the latter demands, STMBC proposed to complete the former, believing that an *ucs* of its particular borough would demonstrate just how constrained it was, and in 1999, STMBC produced the South Tyneside Brownfield Study, demonstrating this position and responding to the government's advocacy of a 60% brownfield target.

However, STMBC practitioners also noted in 2001 that *PPG3:2000* and its attendant better guidance notes had changed the planning for housing process,²⁷⁵ and they were seeking ways of understanding the new expectations being placed upon them, and of applying these new requirements sensitively to STMB's unique situation.

At the 2001 workshop many of the practitioners noted the new requirement of completing an *ucs* (see section 9.5). However, they saw this new national agenda as primarily being driven by Southern circumstances with little regard being paid to the different situation in which Northern authorities, including STMBC, found themselves,²⁷⁶ and this was still felt to be the case retrospectively in 2003.²⁷⁷ Moreover, the practitioners felt that *uc* itself was a response to a Southern problem.²⁷⁸

Consequently, they felt the solution in the new *PPG3:2000* not only did not adequately address the issues of the North, but it also imposed a Southern perspective on Northern planning- with its built-in expectation that policy relevant to the South was also inevitably

²⁷⁵ 'We know that *PPG3[:2000]* has completely changed the ballgame that we are in and [the functional capacity of the green belt study] precedes this' (DW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²⁷⁶ 'The problem with the government view, as always, is (that) it is influenced by the situation in London and the Home Counties, and how do we then transfer it back into South Tyneside?' (DW: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²⁷⁷ '*PPG3[:2000]* was published in reaction to what was going on in the South East, rather than what was happening in the North of England' (JW: interview 04/03).

²⁷⁸ 'I think [the term urban capacity, housing capacity] really emerged with *PPG3[:2000]* when the situation in the South East was becoming the big issue' (JW: interview 04/03).

applicable to the North. Furthermore, they felt that this policy sought to make the North, in part, the solution for the South; assisted through the characterisation of the North as containing vast tracts of redundant previously-developed-land, which could accommodate any shortfall generated from the South's inability to identify sufficient amounts of similar land to reach the required target figure of 60% additional housing on previously-developed-land.

As has been shown (see section 9.5), in 2001 the practitioners of STMBC took issue with being characterised in such a way, seeing STMB as very constrained, and questioning their own ability to deliver the required 60%, let alone absorb other authorities' shortfall. Moreover, they took issue over the then pre-eminence of housing over other uses, noting the importance of other land uses and environmental concerns, and queried the amount of time spent on housing in proportion to other concerns at the recent regional planning guidance inquiry. They accepted the importance of housing, but suggested that a more proportionate response could be made which allowed for other concerns and a more integrated approach to land-use planning, and they expended considerable energy to demonstrate their inability to achieve higher proportions of housing on previously-developed-land in their borough (see section 9.5).

In producing an *ucs*, STMBC questioned what the government guidance document was aspiring to be and consequently what it was trying to offer. Interestingly, *TtP* was not perceived to be a manual of methods²⁷⁹ although it did outline some *ucs* methods, and summarised some *ucs* examples. However, these were often found to be irrelevant to STMBC's situation, and therefore not applicable.²⁸⁰ Moreover, STMBC thought the guidance did not deal adequately with some important and highly complex issues, e.g. sustainability, resulting in the advice being 'thin'.²⁸¹ This suggests that the advice was misconceived in its intent becoming quite cumbersome in its execution due to its generality on the one hand, its complexity on the other, and the lack of any advice on some key issues.

Its generality was experienced through its lack of local sensitivity, felt firstly in terms of the North/South perspective (see above), but secondly through the national policy's insensitivity to the differences between boroughs within a single region, and indeed the

²⁷⁹ '*Tapping the Potential*... certainly was not a manual for... how to do an urban capacity study' (JW: interview 04/03).

²⁸⁰ E.g. LOTS advice was found to be inappropriate to STMBC's circumstances.

²⁸¹ 'I came to the conclusion that government guidance was actually quite thin on the sustainable approach.' (JW: interview 04/03).

difference between localities within single boroughs.²⁸² This was transposed into the methods through the suggestion of methods that might be useful in one area, but which did not seem to apply in theirs.²⁸³ On the other hand the government guidance was also cumbersome in terms of its level of detail²⁸⁴ and the complexity that seemed to be required,²⁸⁵ which was thought by some to outweigh its value and purpose (see section 9.5), whilst still not providing adequate answers, or an agreed national method and approach.

At the regional level²⁸⁶ STMBC felt that *uc* and the completion of an *ucs*:

has been recognised as a regional issue, as a regional exercise with a regional dimension, but I don't think they have injected the regional dimension into what has subsequently happened

JW: interview 04/03

They felt the region had provided opportunities to the authorities to report on progress and to share ideas across local authorities. However, the emphasis appeared to be on the need to do an *ucs* primarily to meet government requirement, and it was felt that there was very little co-ordination in terms of setting out an overall approach or regional method; instead, different authorities were allowed to take distinctly different views on most aspects of their *ucs*.²⁸⁷

²⁸² 'Government guidance ... has been very general, it has relied too much on quoting examples of best practice in particular locations in the UK, without addressing the issues of the tremendous variance of the authorities, various issues may apply or not apply' (JW: interview 04/03).

²⁸³ 'It [*TiP*] is useful because it shows you how other people had approached certain issues but then that becomes a problem because ... the way somebody in Essex approached, say, flats over shops is almost irrelevant to the way that you approach flats over shops in South Tyneside, because the pressures are very different.' (JW: interview 04/03).

²⁸⁴ 'Government is urging us to look at multi-criteria analysis as a basis of selecting sites... it would take about three months to buy an iron... on the various factors you build in. God knows what would happen if we were to use it for housing' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 2).

²⁸⁵ 'How we do it and how *well* we do it ...in all of this the devil is in the detail and I'm abusing this phrase about urban capacity studies. It's in things like the discounting, it's where you *draw the line* on what's the urban area. It's what you include to start with before you begin to discount and then it's how you discount.' (KB: workshop 03/01 tape 1).

²⁸⁶ It should be noted that this was JW's experience of the Government Office for the North East, and that in other regions the experience appears to be different. However, this too demonstrates an allowance on the part of central government for the regional authorities to interpret terms, which allows authorities to use the same terms to mean quite different things. The relationship between the local authorities and the regional authorities in different regions on this issue of co-ordinating *ucs* would be an interesting topic for further research.

²⁸⁷ 'If you take a region such as ours, different authorities have approached this in a different way, which I don't think is too helpful because, although at the end of the day Government Office can produce a patchwork quilt showing right that's the urban capacity of South Tyneside's, that's Sunderland's, that's Gateshead's etc etc., they are just numbers. They won't necessarily relate to somebody else's numbers, because my numbers take into account design and sustainable issues. I know for a fact that other people's don't -some do- so they are not compatible. ...and you end up with this patchwork quilt effect when you look at it from the regional point of view.' (JW: interview 04/03).

To Sum Up: this suggests that the determining of the meaning of *uc* and the ways that it is assessed at national government level and the ways it is understood and assessed (implemented) at the local level has resulted in problems of policy relevance. Here, some feel that the national policy is not relevant to their local issues perhaps because of the differing policy scales, with the difficulty of downsizing strategic national policy to fit local situations in a relevant and sensitive way, allowing some flexibility, without becoming too cumbersome or too disconnected from each other. Alternatively perhaps the problem lies with the problem of policy conversion changing national strategic aspirations into local spatial implementations. This may be made worse where the local authority does not start from the same place as the government, as appears to be the case in some authorities' understanding of *uc*.

9.9 Conclusions

STMBC appear to have had an initial understanding of *uc* which situated it firmly in both the sustainability policy that was being generated around that time (e.g. *Planning for Sustainable Development*), and STMBC's housing requirements in the midst of the housing debate (see chapter 2). They were trying to reconcile how they could accommodate further additional housing in a sustainable way, in what was perceived to be a constrained borough. Their original solution was to focus on sustainability in terms of viability and balance, in relation to the constrained urban areas and under-used outlying villages, and they argued that the urban areas were already so constrained they could not accommodate further additional housing, forcing them to consider green belt incursions. This made their understanding of *uc* even more constrained than this research's Constrained Model, arguing as it did that they had already reached finite capacity not, as others were, that it was approaching.

By 2003, STMBC still thought sustainability was an important aspect of *uc*, but accepted that government had placed the emphasis of the concept in the context of planning for housing, and this was certainly the focus of STMBC's *ucs*. STMBC also found they were less constrained than first thought; partly because some external pressures had been relieved- regional housing expectations had been reduced- partly because developers had shown interest in sites STMBC had thought unlikely to attract attention, and partly because the *ucs* had found more buildings and sites than they had first thought would be available. In many ways this bears out the government's initial starting point that *uc* needed to be assessed with a view to accommodating more housing through more proactive looking and more proactive policy-making. It also bears out the government's initial view that

authorities had a tendency to underestimate the amount of land and buildings for housing in urban areas, and consequently *uc*. Therefore, by 2003, STMBC focused on *uc* in the context of finding housing opportunities in their built-up area. They conceded some urban under-use and severed the argumentation link between town-cramming and village viability, no longer setting village viability as the answer to threatened town-cramming. Their *ucs* helped here, establishing as it did that they had sufficient housing development-opportunity in the urban area for the time being without going into the green belt, although it was possibly limited in the long run.

From this it is possible to see that STMBC have moved in their understanding of *uc* in the same direction as the government, but that they may not have travelled as far. This may be due to the difference between the strategic guidance given at the government level, aimed at relating to all situations, and the more spatial locally-conscious planning that happens at the borough level, where the constraints are felt more concretely, and the theoretical possibilities become actual cases.

The South Tyneside Study 2003 (Consultation Draft) methods and content have largely adopted the methods and content outlined in *TtP*, and these have been co-ordinated at the regional level. However, whilst they have used many of the same development-opportunities, densities, and constraints as those suggested in *TtP* and *PPG3:2000* they have tended to choose some of the more constraining methods, e.g. densities over designed approach, and they have applied them in fairly constrained ways, e.g. applying densities which reflect constraints within them, only applying existing policies etc. This effectively allows discounting in at points before the Constraints-Consideration stage, which they have argued as necessary on practical and realistic grounds, in the context of rather 'ethereal' thinking by *TtP*, but this runs counter to *TtP*'s suggestion that all discounting should be left to the end. Therefore, although STMBC have complied with much of the guidance, this has been done through choosing some of the more constrained methods in the later stages, and through applying these methods in constrained ways. Nevertheless they have found the *uc* they needed to protect the green belt, a finding that many of them did not expect to achieve.

This raises an interesting interpretation of *uc* and the assessment of *uc*, that one practitioner was aware of, but was clear that STMBC did not hold to. This was that the assessment is about finding sufficient housing development-opportunity in the defined urban area to accommodate existing housing requirements, and that once this has been found the assessment can stop. Effectively this allows some *uc* to remain unexplored, and presents authorities as having adequate *uc* when in fact they might have surplus *uc*. This is likely to

constrain regional figures in particular. It also does not help in deciding where future housing should go, or in deciding which out of the housing development- opportunities available to an authority they should seek to take up, because not all of them have been explored equally.

When reflecting on the government guidance STMBC thought there was a mismatch in the guidance they were being given over land for housing policy and the guidance that they needed, in relation to how the region was perceived, the solutions being suggested, and the *ucs* methods being described. Moreover, there was a feeling that the guidance as it pertained to the methods was ambiguous and sometimes scant, leaving ample room for local authority interpretation. This did provide STMBC with sufficient latitude to digress from the recommendations where they felt it was applicable, either as a point of good practice, e.g. including sustainability issues, or because of locally specific characteristics, e.g. the way they dealt with LOTS. However, it was also felt that this ambiguity resulted in producing inconsistencies in authorities' approach to *uc*, resulting in each authority producing an *uc* finding assessed differently and incompatibly. This was thought to be problematic.

Chapter 10 Conclusions

Chapter 10 Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

Uc has emerged as an increasingly important concept in land-use planning, although its meaning has often been inferred and its use (supporting regional and local authority plans) has often been contentious. This research has focused on this lack of concept clarity, with the intention of providing a less ambiguous conceptual meaning of *uc*, and of reflecting on the academic and practice implications of the meaning of the concept once it was established. However, as the research progressed, the planning system itself has altered (see chapter 2 and 4), to enable *uc* to become this more important concept, and this system-change has also transformed the meaning and function of *uc*. This research has charted these changes by looking at the way the government has argued the concept's meaning; by investigating how *uc* has been understood in *ucs*, and by observing how one local authority has considered *uc*.

10.2 A Summary of the Research Findings

10.2.1 The Research Findings from the Government Texts' Analysis

Initially it was possible to design two related but distinctly different descriptive models of the concept of *uc*, evident in the government texts (see chapter 3). These concept-models demonstrated some fundamental differences in the thinking of *uc* (see chapter 4), although both were founded on the notion of sustainability, urban quality, and the need to assess the ability of the urban area to accommodate additional housing. One concept -the Constrained Model- centred on the limits to development, and was cautious about the notion of developing further housing in urban areas; whilst the other -the Opportunity Model- focused on the ability to accommodate increasing amounts of housing in the urban area, centring its attention on how this might be done.

The analysis of the government texts also revealed a shift in the way that *uc* was being considered and applied. Initially, the understanding of *uc* was more closely affiliated to this research's Constrained Model of *uc*, but gradually the texts began to express an understanding closer to the Opportunity Model, often challenging the thinking of the former understanding of *uc* (see chapter 4). This shift in understanding was not uniform either within the texts or across them, but the overall trend was a move away from the Constrained Model's understanding of *uc* towards that of the Opportunity Model, with the

former Constrained Model appearing to fall virtually into abeyance by the end of this period (2002).

The government texts' analysis (chapter 4) also revealed that in 1997-2000 the government thought that the local authorities in particular were lagging behind in their understanding of *uc* and in the ways they were choosing to assess it. This was presented as something that needed to be addressed, and in part *TtP* was produced to rectify this situation. Therefore this research window revealed different conceptualisations of *uc*, and a perceptible shift in thinking away from the more constrained concept of *uc* rooted in environmental capacity towards a more opportunistic, development-orientated understanding of *uc*. It also revealed that this trend was uneven within the government texts themselves, and presented the case that local government thinking and practice whilst delayed was following a similar trend to that of national government.

10.2.2 The Research Findings from the Survey of UCS

The second research window -the survey of *ucs*- reflected further on this government perception, focusing on the methods used to assess *uc* in *ucs* across the country (England), and the material of these considerations (assessment-content).

Findings from the Method-Types Analysis

In the analysis of the many varied method-types, which related this research's concept models to these different method-types, the first key finding was that some of these method-types favoured the Constrained Model and that others favoured the Opportunity Model (chapter 7).

When these method-types were compared with the government's preferences (see chapter 6), the analysis revealed that the government's preferred method-types were consistently those that favoured the Opportunity Model. This suggests considerable consistency in the government's argued position (the first window- chapter 3-4) and advice (*Housing and Urban Capacity* and *TtP*- reflected upon in chapter 6).

When the method-types used in the surveyed *ucs* were set on a timeline, it suggested that the method-types chosen in the post-*TtP* *ucs* correlated with *TtP*'s method-types, but that they tended to reflect the more constrained method-types rather than the more exploratory ones. Therefore, the post-*TtP* *ucs* strongly accorded with government advice (*TtP*), suggesting considerable consistency in the understanding of *uc* and its conceptual evolution across different levels of governance.

However, the post-*TtP ucs* method-type choices accorded less strongly with government's method-type preferences. This indicates that this seemingly consistent trend in the meaning and understanding of *uc* from a Constrained Model of *uc* towards an Opportunity Model of *uc*, observed in the government argumentation, advice and preferences, is not expressed so fully at the local level in the choices that implementing authorities were making over *ucs* method-types. Therefore, whilst there does appear to be an evolution in the conceptual construction of *uc*, as it is expressed in the method-types, away from the Constrained Model of *uc* towards the Opportunity Model, the local authorities do appear to be lagging behind the thinking of central government, as suggested by this research's first window.

Moreover, from the method-type analysis, this research discovered a number of subsidiary findings, which complicated this seemingly simple shift in the understanding of *uc* still further. One of these subsidiary findings was that the design of an overall *ucs* method, with its staged methods (each stage building on the findings of the one before), had a dramatic impact on the *ucs*' ability to find *uc*, and that this design of the overall *ucs* method had a tendency of under-assessing *uc* (see chapter 7); this despite government's efforts to the contrary.

A second subsidiary finding was that whilst the premise and technique of a method-type was important in determining the ability of an *ucs* to discover and account for (assess) all the *uc* in a defined locality, its application was also important. Furthermore, in terms of the method-types' ability to assess *uc*, the significance of how the method-type was applied seemed to be greater for those method-types that favoured the Opportunity Model of *uc*, than for those that favoured the Constrained Model (see chapter 7). It was quite likely that method-types used to discover a Constrained Model of *uc* would assess *uc* as being constrained. However, method-types aimed at discovering an Opportunity Model of *uc* were also quite likely to discover a Constrained Model of *uc*, either due to the choice of the aggregated-method-type or to the way that the method-types were applied (see chapter 7).

The importance of this application was particularly significant at the more micro-decision level of method-type thinking and assessment-content definition, where development-opportunities were dismissed or included, and the impact of constraints was determined on the strength of seemingly minor method decisions left to the authoring authorities' own discretion. This research found that the application variation across the *ucs* was considerable, dramatically altering the *ucs* assessments, but also challenging the seeming

consistency of the method-types and assessment-content, and thereby challenged the consistency of the concept of *uc* itself.

This discretionary nature of the method-types' application was particularly visible where *ucs* used the Discounting method-type, the only method-type suggested by *TtP* at the Constraints-Consideration stage, and the method-type used in most *ucs* after *TtP*'s publication. In many instances, the application of the Discounting method-type greatly reduced the *uc* found, possibly over-emphasising the constraints (see chapter 7). Therefore, although post-*TtP* *ucs* appear to be using the method-types suggested by *TtP*, they may be applying these in ways which are essentially overly reductive, effectively assessing a Constrained Model of *uc*, whilst sometimes using Opportunity Model method-types.

Taken together, these two subsidiary findings and the analysis behind them (see chapter 7) offer an explanation for the phenomenon that *TtP* observed in 2000, where it was beginning to be shown that where *ucs* had been completed, e.g. London, West Sussex, Hertfordshire, *uc* (i.e. the numbers of dwellings that could be accommodated) had been consistently under-estimated, demonstrated by the market finding more *uc* (i.e. the numbers of dwellings actually built) in these localities. At a practice level, this implies that *ucs* are still not assessing *uc* as it is defined in the Opportunity Model, despite efforts to the contrary, and that the Constrained Model concept of *uc* and its underlying premises may still be prevalent in the way that Opportunity Model method-types are applied.

Findings from the Assessment-Content Analysis

The analysis of the assessment-content of *ucs* revealed that in the earlier *ucs* (pre-*TtP*) the choices of what to include in an *ucs*, and how to include it, were more varied than those suggested by *TtP*, and the definitions of development-opportunities and constraints were also less fixed. So, at this time what was assessed as *uc* was still ambiguous and open to considerable interpretation (see chapter 8). More latterly (post-*TtP*) the assessment-content has increasingly included the development-opportunities and constraints advised by *TtP*. Additionally, the relationships between these opportunities and constraints, and their treatment within the *ucs*, have also become more prescribed (although variation still occurs). Therefore, there is now less ambiguity about what is being assessed as *uc*; the concept is becoming more fixed, and this more fixed understanding of *uc* accords with government's advice on the content of an *ucs*.

A further assessment-content finding was that the earlier *ucs* (pre-*TtP*) focused on the impact of development on the locality, with some considering its social and environmental

implications (the Constrained Model), and the later *ucs* (post-*TtP*) focused more on the discovery of new development-opportunities (the Opportunity Model). This would appear to bear out the evolutionary trend of the *uc* concept shifting away from the Constrained Model of *uc* towards the Opportunity Model observed in the other analytical elements (the government texts and the method-type analysis). However, in the midst of the earlier *ucs* emphasising the constraints on development, they had space to reflect on ways of overcoming some of these constraints, sometimes going so far as to consider what policies might be used to regenerate areas, for example. In contrast, the later *ucs* have given little space to the constraints and have treated the development-opportunities more cursorily, so that in actuality the earlier *ucs* have often been more exploratory than the later ones.

Taken together, these two main findings reveal that the observed greater clarity in assessment-content has been brought about primarily by government advice (*TtP*). This clarity may have widened the number and type of development-opportunities considered in *ucs*, but it has also challenged the exploratory nature of *ucs*, sought for in the same government advice. This has undermined the government's intention whilst simultaneously accepting its requirements. It has also allowed the assessment of *uc* pertaining more closely to the Constrained Model of *uc* to be assessed under the auspices of the Opportunity Model method-types and argumentation.

This bears out the findings from the method-types analysis and the government text analysis: that government has consistently sought to establish the Opportunity Model concept of *uc*, and that other authorities have lagged behind in its take-up. This is demonstrated through the assessment-content by the general acceptance in *ucs* of the categories of development-opportunity and constraints that must be seen to have been included, but a reluctance within these *ucs* to engage in exploring these development-opportunities fully with a view to overcoming the constraints and maximising the development possibilities.

10.2.3 The Research Findings from the Case Study

These findings are further borne out by the findings from the third window of analysis: the case study. Here, as with the government text analysis, the main finding was that the concept of *uc* originated initially in the idea of environmental capacity, and focused on STMB's inability to accommodate additional housing sustainably within the urban areas, to the point that the authority was arguing a case more constrained than that presented by the Constrained Model (see chapter 9).

The second main finding was that this authority too has reconstructed how to think about *uc* in the light of government advice, and as suggested by the survey of *ucs*, has placed the concept in the context of planning for housing, rather than environmental sustainability, and has assessed it accordingly.

In this assessment, the authority has largely taken up *ucs* method-types and assessment-content advised by *TtP*. Like many *ucs*, the method-types used have been those that have been advised by government, rather than the government's preferred options; and the authority has also taken decisions aimed at limiting its assessment to urban areas, not the green belt as first discussed, and focusing on the development-opportunities and constraints presented by government, with an additional consideration of the sustainability of site development. The outcome of the *ucs* has been that more *uc* was found than was anticipated- enough to meet the new housing requirement for STMBC presented in the region's new housing strategy. This suggests that the *ucs* demonstrated that *uc* was less constrained than STMBC thought.

However, the housing requirement itself has been considerably reduced from the anticipated amount in the late 1990's, and the new method of determining this allocation in yearly yields has also helped STMBC to meet its required housing allocation. STMBC's ability to achieve this housing requirement has been further assisted by government's acknowledgement of a new problem: housing abandonment in some areas in the North East and the region's resulting acceptance of housing demolition without necessary replacement, alleviating the pressure for STMBC to replace demolished housing in equivalent numbers. Moreover, STMBC have been further helped in achieving this housing requirement by developers showing an unexpected interest in developing at very high densities some of its more difficult sites. These more contextual factors have all influenced STMBC's ability to find sufficient *uc* within its urban areas, as much as its own change in stance and its approach to assessing *uc*.

A final observation which emerged from the case study analysis, reiterating its equivalent finding in the *ucs* survey, was that whilst the assessment of *uc* was becoming increasingly consistent, with most authorities using similar method-types to assess similar assessment-content at a more detailed level, this broke down to reveal that the micro-decisions of the different local authorities in the region resulted in a variety of urban capacities being assessed, which could not easily be considered to be akin to each other.

Taken together, these findings repeat the findings from the other windows, that *uc* was originally an assessment of the constraining influences on development and an area's

inability to accommodate more (Constrained Model), but that as an idea it has become more strongly rooted in land-use policy, linked to housing, and more focused on reflecting on the development-opportunities rather than the constraints (Opportunity Model), and this suggests the same kind of evolution in thinking found elsewhere in the research.

These findings also affirm government's thinking that authorities are still less opportunistic in their thinking of *uc* than either government or the market, and that they continue to bear out the possibility that the amount of *uc* found by *ucs* may well be an under-assessment, albeit justified by very good reasons.

10.3 The Implications of the Research Findings on the Meaning of *UC*

This research sought to discover the meaning of *uc*, which appeared as a new term in the late 1980s, became established in the late 1990s, and appeared to be used differently by a variety of organisations and authorities.

The research findings suggest that there are two distinctly different understandings of *uc*, one rooted in environmental capacity thinking and the other in the new agenda of accommodating more housing in urban areas and on previously-developed-land (see chapter 2). Both of these *uc* concepts are based on similar aspirations of providing a well-designed, sustainable urban area, which offers a high quality living experience; and both accept the need to assess the ability of urban localities to achieve this. However, the assumptions underpinning what is necessary to achieve these aspirations are radically different, and carry the two distinctly different concepts in opposite directions. Here one concept advocates the constraining of development (the Constrained Model), whilst the other argues the need to encourage it (the Opportunity Model).

From an analysis of the concept's argumentation and assessment at central government and local government level, and with a consideration of the different practices countrywide, this research has found that to a surprising degree the conceptual understanding of *uc* has followed a similar evolution from the Constrained Model of *uc* towards the Opportunity Model, with government seemingly taking the lead, and local and regional authorities following behind, albeit possibly at a different pace. Indeed the trend is so uniform across the analytical windows that the Opportunity Model concept of *uc* could now be argued to be the conceptual construction of *uc*, and the Constrained Model could now be argued to be consigned to history.

These analytical windows also demonstrate that government's construction of the concept and its assessment has been surprisingly consistent. They also demonstrate the importance

this government advice has had in the formulation of the local authorities' conceptual construction of *uc*, and in its assessment, including its assessment methods and its assessment-content.

However, these windows also demonstrate that whilst local authorities are taking up the government's use of *uc* reflecting the Opportunity Model, they are often still assessing it in ways that are reductive, and may still be finding *uc* that reflects the Constrained Model more than the Opportunity Model. Consequently, the assessment findings may now be out of kilter with the concept as it is discussed at local, regional and central government levels. This effectively maintains the dichotomy observed in the early ambiguity of the concept that originally triggered this research. It results in a more Constrained Model *uc* being assessed, in the context of land-use planning for housing, under the guise of a more Opportunity Model discussion, albeit one that tends to fall short of the regeneration discussion advocated in some instances by government.

10.4 The Ramifications of the Research Findings on Contemporary Practice

These findings are based on observations of contemporary practice, and are therefore rooted in practice, and influence practice. As observations they reflect on what is going on in the midst of a very fast moving discussion, often amongst practitioners too busy to comprehensively observe the patterns of thinking and practice that are emerging.

The first finding with ramifications on practice is that the discussion has moved from that of sustainable development in the light of environmental capacity, environmental auditing and environmental assessment, to become one of site availability, development-opportunities, and an examination of how a locality's urban areas will accommodate additional housing. Therefore, the concept has become one that is principally a land-use planning idea.

This positioning has been strengthened by the concurrent, and not unrelated, systemic shift in planning for housing, brought about by changes to *PPG3* and its related Better Practice Guides. These have helped to move the idea of *uc* from the peripheral issue explored voluntarily by some authorities supporting contentious claims at EIP (the Constrained Model of *uc*), to a central planning for housing idea, underpinning the main thrust of policy being presented at EIP (the Opportunity Model). In becoming this construction of *uc* in this more prescribed context, *uc* as an idea has taken over the space and function of the now defunct idea of land availability, and the land availability study.

Apparently, as a result of this more established positioning of *uc*, the current version of the Opportunity Model of *uc* focuses less strongly on regenerative policy than some of its more radical predecessors, and the assessment method-types provide less space for the exploration of such policies being taken up. This, it would appear, is due to practitioners not wanting to be left open to the charge that their *uc* is unrealistic or impracticable. However, it holds *uc* as an idea firmly in the discussions of land-use planning, and appears to have prevented it from moving into the discussions of regeneration anticipated in the late 1990s.

The second finding with practitioner ramifications is that the concept appears to have become more fixed on the one hand, with people discussing it and assessing it in more similar ways than they previously did. Nevertheless, there continues to be considerable variation in the micro-decisions of the method-types and assessment-content made by the authoring authorities, and this continues to prevent clarity developing over what has been assessed as *uc* in different regions, and indeed by neighbouring local authorities in the same region. This has been particularly true in the North East, where each authority has been allowed to design its own method of assessment. It may also be true in some of the other regions, although in many the regional planning bodies have been more prescriptive, providing methods for the local authorities to apply. However, whilst it continues, this lack of clarity continues to raise questions about what is actually being assessed as *uc*, and what *uc* means- the start of this research.

A third finding with implications on practice has been that the way the aggregated-method-types are designed to work together has a tendency to orientate the *ucs* towards the Constrained Model of *uc*, unless all the method-types chosen favour the Opportunity Model and they are applied in ways which draw out the opportunities. When set in the context of the earlier finding that practitioners are often reluctant, firstly, to take up the more opportunistic method-types, and secondly, to apply them in the most opportunistic way, it is perhaps unsurprising that *TtP* discovered most *ucs* under-assessed the *uc* in the locality.

Some of the practitioner reluctance to assess *uc* in ways more closely affiliated to the Opportunity Model is due to their perception that many of these development-opportunities are unrealistic, and that their *ucs* will lose credibility if they are included. This position may have inadvertently been strengthened by the changes in *PPG3:2000*. This has established *uc* as the new 'land-availability', setting it in the context of land-use planning policy, and determining its function as the new contentious assessment open to stakeholder

challenges. As such it is understandable that practitioners are reluctant to appear unrealistic. However, this undermines the original idea that Opportunity Model *uc* needed to be explored imaginatively and extensively, and as has been shown by this research and others (*TtP*), has produced the outcome of under-assessing the *uc* possibilities.

The net outcome of these findings which practitioners should perhaps also be aware of is that the way *uc* is being discussed may now appear to favour the Opportunity Model of *uc*, but the way that it is assessed may still reflect the Constrained Model, so that there remains something of a gap between what is talked about, and what is found.

Finally, the observed trajectory of the argumentation and assessment of *uc* has indicated that *uc* has come to mean housing development-opportunities in urban areas, rather than the ability of the urban area to accommodate housing before it is full up, with its emphasis on finite capacity. Therefore, whereas previously more space in an *ucs* was given to the environmental impact and social acceptability of developing additional housing in these localities, these have become much less significant in more recent *ucs*. Yet it was these considerations which first fuelled the need for a concept of *uc* at all, to such an extent that some authorities went to the voluntary time and expense to assess it. This raises a number of questions for practitioners to answer: what has become of this original idea? Has it become defunct? And finally, is there now a gap in planning practice, previously occupied by *uc*, which needs to be revisited and filled?

10.5 The Contribution of this Research to the Research Community and Further Research Opportunities

This research provides a first attempt at examining the way that *uc* as an idea has been and continues to be discussed in planning circles, and the implications this has had on the meaning of the concept, its evolution, and the way that *uc* appears to be understood now.

To achieve this it has produced diagrammatic models of two ways that *uc* can be understood- the Constrained Model and the Opportunity Model, and it has used these to analyse the argumentation of government's and a local authority's understanding of *uc* and the *ucs* assessment method-types and assessment-content of 22 different *ucs* across the country. This method of analysis in itself is a contribution to the research community.

This research approach has provided an in-depth and rigorous analysis of the way that *uc* has been constructed and argued over the years, primarily by government, but also in the policy context of a North Eastern local authority, and the widest *ucs* method survey to date, concentrating on the meaning of these methods on the conceptual construction of *uc* rather

than the method techniques themselves. Here the research has built on work carried out particularly by Urbed and Llewelyn-Davies (see chapter 5).

This research has also provided almost the first analysis of the content of *ucs*, although Urbed:1999 reviewed the development-opportunities, trying to determine the take-up of particular opportunities, and the amount of *uc* missed (see chapters 5 and 8). Nevertheless, this research does present the first attempt to consider how the content of *ucs* influences the constructed meaning of *uc*.

Furthermore, this research has demonstrated why *ucs* continue to under-estimate *uc* despite government's method and content advice aimed at remedying this problem, and despite authoring authorities' seeming take-up of this advice. It is thought that for many this will prove the most useful contribution to the ongoing discussion of *uc*.

The research has also demonstrated that *uc* as an idea continues to revolve around issues of assessment, the quality and sustainability of urban areas and the desirability of urban living, but that now it focuses on the opportunities for developing further housing in urban locations, whereas it previously focused on the inability of these areas to accommodate more. However, it has also demonstrated that *uc* has remained a land-use planning issue and has not been extended into the regeneration agenda, suggested as a possible way forward by government at the end of the 1990s.

Throughout the research interesting avenues for future research have emerged and have had to be left. One such avenue is the need for someone to look at the apparent conceptual gap that has been created by *uc* evolving towards the Opportunity Model of *uc* and away from the Constrained Model. This raises questions about how the environmental and social impact of planned allocated housing in urban areas will be assessed, now that *uc* has come to mean something more closely affiliated to the idea of land-availability, and how this might be incorporated into the planning for housing context, assuming that it should be and can be.

A second opportunity for possible research is an investigation into how different organisations -HBF, local authority planners, lobbyists- are variously constructing and using the concept in the new planning for housing system to achieve their interests, probably focusing on the power relations these reveal, with a view to finding out if the new *PPG3:2000* has altered these relations in any way, how and to what effect. This analysis could be set in the context of previous work done by other commentators- Baker and Wong (1997), Hull (1998), and Rydin (1988)- who reflected on the shortcomings of the previous arrangements.

A third possibility for research, also worthy of further investigation, and one this researcher aims to take up, is an analysis of how the different regional planning bodies are determining to co-ordinate the local authorities' *ucs* in the context of their remit to do so, what this says about the regions' understanding of 'co-ordination' and *uc*, and what it says about the emerging relationships between the local and regional authorities.

A final research option, also of interest to this researcher, relates to the claims in the North that *uc* is driven by a Southern agenda, and the current problems of housing abandonment in many urban areas. This has been presented by the CURS Report as very localised and sectorialised housing market failure. As has been observed through the case study, this newly recognised issue has altered the policy context in which local authorities are operating, and a number of authorities including Newcastle City Council have been awarded Pathfinder Initiative funding to address it. These particular abandoned areas are therefore eligible for considerable regenerative funding, whilst at the same time they represent a development-opportunity often downplayed by *uc*; however, they might also represent a further way of achieving *uc* as it is depicted in the Opportunity Model, taking the idea beyond the land-use planning debates into the discussions of estate regeneration and funding, revitalising the *uc* concept and widening its agenda on the one hand, whilst sustainably improving the urban quality and liveability of these estates and urban areas on the other.

This research has demonstrated that the meaning of *uc* is difficult to tie down. It has highlighted that this is due in part to the changing context in which *uc* is being considered. But it has also demonstrated that this difficulty is due to changes in the way that *uc* is discussed, and differences in the way that it is assessed, making what is being talked about and what is being assessed now very different from what it was before.

It is hoped that this research has provided an initial insight into how this concept came about, its inconsistent evolution, and where it may be heading. It is also hoped that this research has highlighted some of the practice issues concerning *uc* and its assessment, and that it has provided a reference point and a basis for future research.

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KB 03/03

JW 03/03

Transcripts of workshop 03/03:

Transcript Tape 1 03/01

Transcript Tape 2 03/01

Transcript Tape 3 03/01

Minutes of Meetings between the researcher and STMBC:

Minutes of meeting 11/00 meeting with KB

Minutes of meeting 03/00 meeting with KB

Minutes of meeting 10/02 meeting with JW

Memorandum

Hull, A. (2001) internal memo to S. Gunn 30/08/01 on the development of the case award with South Tyneside

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